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THE SCRAPBOOK OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Other Katherine Mansfield Books

BLISS
THE DOVES' NEST
THE GARDEN PARTY
IN A GERMAN PENSION
SOMETHING CHILDISH

JOURNAL OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Introduction by J. Middleton Murry

LETTERS OF KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Edited by J. Middleton Murry

POEMS

THE CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF
KATHERINE MANSFIELD

By Ruth Mantz

CONSTABLE & COMPANY LTD

THE SCRAPBOOK
of
KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Edited by
J. M. M.

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INTRODUCTION

THIS final collection of Katherine Mansfield's literary remains needs some explanation. The explanation is simple. About a year ago, for medical reasons, it appeared imperative that I should lose no time in tidying up my affairs. I turned my hand first to Katherine Mansfield's papers, because her handwriting is very difficult, and it seemed unlikely that anyone but myself would be able to decipher them. Being temporarily incapacitated from other work, I employed myself in transcribing all the unpublished fragments of her writing that I could find, and arranging them in chronological order.

It is possible that I attach an exaggerated importance to these. But since I had the same misgiving when I originally gathered together her *Journal*, which European opinion has received as a minor classic, I feel that I must trust to my instinct again, and again hope that what is precious and inimitable to me may be so to others. The situation has changed in this respect that there are now many people in many different countries—in France, perhaps, above all others—who take a peculiar personal and loving interest in all that pertains to Katherine Mansfield. In their eyes, I know, this book needs no apology.

It would have been more satisfactory, perhaps,

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if the various elements of this Scrapbook could have been distributed in new editions of her books—the new journal entries in her *Journal*, the few finished stories in the volume *Something Childish*, the fragments in an enlarged *Doves' Nest*; but, in the first place, that would have been very unfair to those who possess the existing editions of these books, and secondly, this seemingly haphazard arrangement, though on a larger scale, is singularly like that of one of her own notebooks—ordinary French school *cahiers*, mostly—in which finished and unfinished stories, quotations, odd observations, intimate confessions, unposted letters, and stray sentences are crammed up like some rich thievery. Except in point of legibility this scrapbook is, in fact, more *like* one of her own notebooks even than her published *Journal*.

And it has seemed to me that there is a manifest completeness about most of the fragments which are included here; few indeed even of the pieces which I know to be unfinished (in the sense that Katherine intended or hoped to continue them) make that impression upon me. In the case of the majority of the pieces printed here, where there is no such external indication, I find it impossible to decide whether they are or are not finished. When Katherine was very young she was addicted to short pieces which she romantically called “vignettes”, or “cameos”. Those which have survived of these early pieces are not worth printing. But it is evident to me that, as her gifts matured, her original bent towards the

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short piece was confirmed and vindicated. Her power of presenting a complete situation, or conveying an entire atmosphere, in a transparently simple page or paragraph became remarkable, indeed.

Therefore I doubt whether the epithet "unfinished" can validly be applied to more than one or two of these fragments. And for another reason, too. As I have hinted in a note towards the end of this book, Katherine "saw" and wrote, in flashes. Sometimes the flashes were relatively long, sometimes very short indeed. But of steady and equable composition there is no trace in her manuscripts, nor in my memory of her at work. When the full tide of inspiration came, she wrote till she dropped with fatigue—sometimes all through the night, in defiance of her illness.

With regard to the unpublished letters, I had to abandon my original intention of including a number of them in this volume. They are so numerous, and stand so much in need of other letters for elucidation, that no other course is practicable but to prepare a new edition of the letters as a whole. This I hope to do, if my power of work is restored to me, in the course of 1940.

J. MIDDLETON MURRY.

LARLING, *June* 1939.

P.S.—I gratefully acknowledge the kindness of the following in allowing me to print Katherine Mansfield's quotations from books of which they

Introduction

own the copyright: the author and the publisher of that remarkable and neglected book *Cosmic Anatomy*, "M.B. Oxon" and Messrs. J. M. Watkins; Messrs Macmillan and the representatives of the late Thomas Hardy for the verses from *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*; and Messrs. Heinemann for passages from Mrs. Constance Garnett's translations of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* and *The Possessed*, and Tchehov's *Letters*.

SCRAPBOOK

1905-1913

About Pat.

In the days of our childhood we lived in a great old rambling house planted lonesomely in the midst of huge gardens, orchards and paddocks. We had few toys, but—far better—plenty of good strong mud and a flight of concrete steps that grew hot in the heat of the sun and became dreams of ovens.

The feeling of making a mud pie with all due seriousness, is one of the most delicious feelings that we experience; you sit with your mixture in the doll's saucepan, or if it is soup, in the doll's wash-hand basin, and stir and stir, and thicken and 'whip', and become more deliciously grimy each minute; whilst the sense of utter wickedness you have if it happens to be on clean pinafore days thrills me to this hour.

Well I remember one occasion when we made pies with real flour, stole some water from the dish by the dog's kennel, baked them and ate them.

Very soon after, three crushed, subdued little girls wended their way quietly up to bed, and the blind was pulled down.

At that period our old Irish gardener was our

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hero. His name was Patrick Sheehan. On Sunday he wore gloves with real 'kid backs', and a tie-pin made out of a boar's tusk. Every morning I went across to the feed-room where he cleaned father's boots, and always at a certain stage of the proceedings, I would say, "Oh please, Pat, don't!" He invariably replied that "nothing else at all gave them such a fine gloss". He used to hoist me up on to the table, and recount long tales of the Dukes of Ireland whom he had seen and even conversed with. We were most proud of our gardener having rubbed shoulders with Ireland's aristocracy, and in the evening when Pat was at tea in the kitchen we would steal out and beg him to show us the manners of the people in Ireland. Standing in a row, hand in hand, we would watch while Pat put some salt on his knife, tapped it off with his fork, the little finger of his right hand well curled, in a manner which seemed to us ingenious enough for the first Lords of the land.

Pat was never very fond of me. I am afraid he did not think my character at all desirable. I professed no joy in having a bird in a cage; and one day committed the unpardonable offence of picking a pumpkin flower. He never recovered from the shock occasioned by that last act of barbarism. I can see him now, whenever I came near, nodding his head and saying, "Well now to think! It might have become the finest vegetable of the season, and given us food for weeks."

Pat's birthdays occurred with alarming frequency. We always gave him the same presents

Pat the Gardener

—three sticks of Juno tobacco and three cakes of hoky-poky. The presentation took place in the back-yard, and he sang us a wonderful Irish song, of which we never guessed any more than the phrase, "I threw up me hat". It seemed to be the one definite remark throughout.

He considered it a duty to propose to each cook who came to the house, making them the offer of himself, the gloves with the 'kid backs', and the boar-tusk tie-pin whenever the occasion demanded. They never by any chance accepted him, and I am sure that he never expected them to do so.

Every afternoon he used to brush his old brown bowler hat, harness the mare and start for town, and every evening when he had come home it was my delight to wait till he had unharnessed the mare, then to be lifted on to her back, and start at a jogging trot through the big white gates, down the quiet road and into the paddock. There I waited until Pat came swinging along with the milk pails.

On those late evenings he had wonderful stories to tell of a little old man no bigger than his thumb with a hat as high as the barbed-wire fence, who in the night crept out of the creek, climbed up the blue-gum tree, picked some leaves from the topmost branches, and then crept down again.

"You see," Pat would say, his dear weather-beaten face as grave as possible, "it's from blue gums that you get eucalyptus, and the old man suffered from cold, living in such dampness."

On those evenings, too, I had my first lessons in the mysterious art of milking, but try as I would

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I could never obtain more than a teacupful. On several occasions the ignominy of this reduced me to tears, but Pat would say, "You see, she's such a keen old cow is Daisy. Having had children of her own, she knows how much you ought to have, and how much more would give you indigestion." I was always much comforted. Pat had a wonderfully young heart. He entered into our pleasures with as much zest as we did ourselves. I played a game which had no end and no beginning, but was called 'Beyond the Blue Mountains'. The scene was generally placed near the rhubarb beds, and Pat officiated as the villain, the hero, and even the villainess, with unfailing charm.

Sometimes, to make it more real, we had lunch together, sitting on the wheel-barrow turned upside down, and sharing the slice of German sausage and a bath-bun with loaf sugar on it.

On Sunday mornings Pat, in the full glory of a clean shirt and corduroy trousers, took us for a walk in the great pine plantation.

He, childishly, used to collect gum and carry it in a corner of his handkerchief. For years afterwards I believed that those trees just grew for the old witches of the woods, who used their needles in making the big, big umbrella over our heads, and all the dresses of the flowers, basting their nice, fine, blue-sky calico with the gum thoughtfully provided for them. . . .

When we left that house in the country and went to live in town, Pat left us to try his luck in the goldfields. We parted with bitter tears. He presented each of my sisters with a goldfinch and

The Grandmother

me with a pair of white china vases cheerfully embroidered with forget-me-nots and pink roses. His parting advice to us was to look after ourselves in this world and never to pick the flowers out of the vegetable garden because we liked the colour.

From that day to this I have never heard of him.
(1905.)

The Grandmother.

Underneath the cherry trees
The grandmother in her lilac printed gown
Carried Little Brother in her arms.
A wind, no older than Little Brother,
Shook the branches of the cherry trees
So that the blossom snowed on her hair
And on her faded lilac gown
And all over Little Brother.
I said "May I see?"
She bent down and lifted a corner of his shawl.
He was fast asleep,
But his mouth moved as if he were kissing.
"Beautiful!" said the Grandmother, nodding and smiling.
But my lips quivered,
And looking into her kind face
I wanted to be in the place of Little Brother,
To put my arms round her neck
And kiss the two tears that shone in her eyes.
(1909.)

Along the Gray's Inn Road.

Over an opaque sky grey clouds moving
heavily like the wings of tired birds. Wind

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blowing: in the naked light buildings and people appear suddenly grotesque—too sharply modelled, maliciously tweaked into being.

A little procession wending its way up the Gray's Inn Road. In front, a man between the shafts of a hand-barrow that creaks under the weight of a piano-organ and two bundles. The man is small and greenish brown, head lolling forward, face covered with sweat. The piano-organ is bright red, with a blue and gold "dancing picture" on either side. The bundle is a woman. You see only a black mackintosh topped with a sailor hat; the little bundle she holds has chalkwhite legs and yellow boots dangling from the loose ends of the shawl. Followed by two small boys, who walk with short steps, staring intensely at the ground, as though afraid of stumbling over their feet.

No word is spoken; they never raise their eyes. And this silence and preoccupation gives to their progress a strange dignity.

They are like pilgrims straining forward to Nowhere, dragging, and holding to, and following after that bright red, triumphant thing with the blue and gold "dancing picture" on either side.

(1910.)

Sunday Lunch.

Sunday lunch is the last of the cannibal feasts. It is the wild, tremendous orgy of the upper middle classes, the hunting, killing, eating

Sunday Lunch

ground of all the George-the-Fifth-and-Mary English artists. Pray do not imagine that I consider it to be ever so dimly related to Sunday dinner. Never! Sunday dinner consists of a number of perfectly respectable dead ladies and gentlemen eating perfectly respectable funeral bakemeats with all those fine memories of what British beef and blood has stood for, with all that delicate fastidiousness as to the fruit in season, and the eternal and comfortable pie. Sunday lunch is followed by a feeling of excessive excitement, by a general flush, a wild glitter of the eye, a desire to sit close to people, to lean over backs of chairs, to light your cigarette at someone else's cigarette, to look up and thank them while doing so. And above all there is that agitating sense of intimacy—that true esprit de corps of the cannibal gathering. Different indeed is the close to the Sunday dinner. It has never been known to come to a decided finish, but it dies down and dwindles and fades away like a village glee singing Handel's "Largo," until finally it drops into sofas and chairs and creeps to box-ottomans and beds, with illustrated magazines, digesting itself asleep until tea time.

The Society for the Cultivation of Cannibalism waxes most fat and kicks hardest (strictly under the table) in Chelsea, in St. John's Wood, in certain select squares, and (God help them) gardens. Its members are legion, for there is no city in this narrow world which contains so vast a number of artists as London. Why, in London

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you cannot read the books for the authors, you cannot see the pictures for the studies, you simply cannot hear the music for the musicians' photographs. And they are so careless, so proud of their calling, "Look at me! Behold me, I am an artist!" Mark their continued generosity of speech—"We artists; artists like ourselves." See them make sacrifice to their Deity—not with wreath or garland or lovely word or fragrant spices. They will not demand of her as of old time the gift of true vision and the grace of truth. "Ah, no," they say, "we shall give her of ourselves. The stuffs of our most expensive dresses, our furniture, our butcher's bills, our divorce cases, our thrilling adulteries. We men shall have her into the smoking-room and split her sides with our dirty stories, we women shall sit with her on the bedside brushing our side curls and talking of sex until the dawn kisses to tearful splendour the pink rose of morning. And we shall always remain great friends, for we shall never tell the truth to each other."

From half-past one until two of the clock the cannibal artists gather together. They are shown into drawing-rooms by marionettes in black suits and foreign complexions. The form of greeting is expansive, critical and reminding. Hostess to female cannibal: "You dear! How glad I am to see you!" They kiss. Hostess glances rapidly over guest, narrows her eyes and nods. "Sweet!" Raises her eyebrows. "New? From the little French shop?" Takes the guest's arm.

"Now I want to introduce you to Kaila Scarrotski. He's Hungarian. And he's been doing those naked backs for that café. And I know all about Hungary, and those extraordinary places. He's just read your 'Pallors of Passion' and he swears you've Slav blood." She presses the guest's hand, thereby conveying: "Prove you have. Remember I didn't ask you to my lunch to wait until the food was served and then eat it and go. Beat your tom-tom, dear." When male meets male the greeting is shorter. "Glad you came." Takes guest aside. "I say, that French dancing woman's here. Over there—on the leopard skin—with the Chinese fan. Pitch into her, there's a good chap."

The marionette reappears. "Lunch is served." They pay no attention whatever to the marionette, but walk defiantly into the dining-room as though they knew the fact perfectly well and had no need of telling. They see themselves, still with this air of immense unconcern and a sort of "Whatever you give me to eat and the forks and knives thereof will not surprise me, I'm absolutely indifferent to food. I haven't the faintest idea of what there is on the table." And then quite suddenly, with the most deliberate lightness, a victim is seized by the cannibals. "Suppose you've read Fanton's 'Grass Widower'?" "Yes." "Not as good as 'The Evergreen Petals'." "No." "I did not think so either." "Tailed off." "So long-winded." "Fifty pounds." "But there were bits, half-lines you know, and adjectives." The knife pauses. "Oh, but have you read his

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latest?" "Nothing. All about ships or something. Not a hint of passion." Down comes the knife, James Fanton is handed round.

"I haven't read it yet." "Not like 'The Old Custom'." "Well, it can't be as good." ". . . Writing in the *Daily Mail* . . ." "Three to four thousand a year." "A middle-class mind, but interesting." The knife wavers. "But can't keep the big mould for more than a paragraph." His bones are picked.

This obvious slaughter of the absentees is only a preliminary to a finer, more keen and difficult doing to death of each other. With kind looks and little laughs and questions the cannibals prick with the knife. "I liked your curtain-raiser fearfully. But when are you going to give us a really *long* play? Why *are* you so against plot? Of course I'm old-fashioned. I'm ashamed. I still like action on the stage . . ." "I went to your show yesterday. There were the funniest people there. People absolutely ignorant—you know the kind. And trying to be facetious, not to be able to distinguish a cabbage from a baby. I boiled with rage . . ." "But if they offered you eighty pounds in America for a short poem, why ever didn't you write it?" "I think it's brave of you to advertise so much, I really do, I wish I had the courage—but at the last moment I can't. I never shall be able."

With ever greater skill and daring the cannibals draw blood, or the stuff like blood that flows in their veins.

Sunday Lunch

But the horrible tragedy of the Sunday lunch is this: However often the Society kills and eats itself, it is never real enough to die, it is never brave enough to consider itself well eaten.

(1912.)

1914

January.

(At the top of accounts beginning Tea,
Chemist, Marmalade.)

Tea, the chemist and marmalade—
Far indeed to-day I've strayed,
Through Paths untrodden, shops unbeaten,
And now the bloody stuff is eaten.
The chemist, the marmalade and tea,
Lord, how nice and cheap they be!

Tips and fares and silly femmes
Have skipped about my day like lambs,
And great their happiness increased
Since I am the one who has been fleeced!

“‘In Russia’, Tchehov said to Gorky, ‘an honest man is a sort of bogey that nurses frighten children with’. It is wonderful how like Gorky Tchehov talked when he talked to Gorky.” (George Calderon.)

I'd like to follow that 'lead'.

The Toothache Sunday.

Ah, why can't I describe all that happens!
I think quite seriously that L. and I are so extra-
ordinarily interesting. It is not while *the thing*

The Sacrifice

is happening that I think that, but the significance is near enough to bite its heels and make me start, too. Have I ruined her happy life? Am I to blame? When I see her pale and so tired that she shuffles her feet as she walks when she comes to me—drenched after tears; when I see the buttons hanging off her coats and her skirt torn—why do I call myself to account for all this, and feel that I am responsible for her? She gave me the gift of herself. ‘Take me, Katie. I am yours. I will serve you and walk in your ways, Katie.’ I ought to have made a happy being of her. I ought to have ‘answered her prayers’. They cost me so little and they were so humble. I ought to have probed my own worthiness of a disciple. Yes, I am altogether to blame.

Sometimes, I excuse myself: ‘We were too much of an age. I was experimenting and being hurt when she leaned upon me. I couldn’t have stopped the sacrifice if I’d wanted to’—but it’s all prevarication. To-night I saw her all drawn up with pain, and I came from J.’s room to see her crouched by the fire like a little animal. So I helped her to bed on the sofa and made her a hot drink and brought her some rugs and my dark eider-down. And as I tucked her up, she was so touching—her long fair hair—so familiar, remembered for so long—drawn back from her face that it was easy to stoop and kiss her, not as I usually do, one little half-kiss, but quick loving kisses such as one delights to give a tired child. “Oh!” she sighed, “I have dreamed of this.” (All the while I was faintly revolted.) “Oh!” she

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breathed, when I asked her if she was comfortable. "This is Paradise, beloved!" Good God! I must be at ordinary times a callous brute. It is the first time in all these years that I have leaned to her and kissed her like that. I don't know why I always shrink ever so faintly from her touch. I could not kiss her lips.

Ah, how I long to talk about it sometimes—not for a moment, but until I am tired out and have got rid of the burden of memory. It is ridiculous in me to expect J. to understand or to sympathize; and yet when he does not and is bored or hums, I am dreadfully wretched—mainly perhaps because of my own inability to enchant him.

. . . Lifted her poor face all stained and patched with crying.

Her body was obedient, but how slowly and gravely it obeyed, as though protesting against the urge of her brave spirit.

There was no sound in the room but her quiet breathing and the fluttering rush of the fire and the sting of the rain on the glass. Outside, lights appeared at one and then another window. The sky was grey and folded except for one lane of pale red fringed with clouds.

Content to stand outside and bathe and bask in the light that fell from Katie's warm bright windows, content to listen to the voice of her darling among other voices and to look for her darling's gracious shadow.

(March.)

Sleeping House

The Last Friday. To-day the world is cracking. I am waiting for J. and L. I have been sewing as Mother used to sew—with one's heart pushing in the needle. Horrible! But is there really something far more horrible than ever could resolve itself into reality, and is it that something which terrifies me so? In the middle of it I looked out and saw the workmen having lunch. They had lighted a fire and sat on a board balanced between two barrels. They were eating and smoking and cutting up sandwiches.

Sleeping House.

She lay in bed, still, straight, her hands clasped above her head, her lips faintly parted, and her eyes wide open.

Now all the doors were shut in the house, and now Mr. Derry had wound up his watch and leapt into his side of the bed, lying down straight, the sheet to his chin, beside his frail wife.

Her little face, framed in springy light hair, lay pressed in the pillow; her hands, half hidden in the long frilled sleeves, were folded over the quilt.

"Reading?"

"Yes, dear."

He turned out the light and was asleep like a shot. She would have fallen asleep too, but her heart was a little 'dicky'. It would not go quite fast enough, and that made breathing so difficult. "If I could only take a long deep breath" . . . She

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closed her eyes and a tiny line appeared between her brows and she drew in the air in little sips. "No, it's not worth while disturbing Henry to get my heart mixture. He's been so wonderfully good and patient, loathing these affairs as I know he does." Full of love she listened to his strong even breathing. "My darling!" In some strange way the sound of Henry's breathing eased her, oh, soothed her wonderfully. . . .

Now Vera read the last verses appointed for that night by the Bible Society, "For he mightily convinced the Jews and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ," and put the hand-painted Jerusalem-lily book-marker in her Bible and blew out the candle and tried not to remember "*La faute des roses*" but to think over what she had read until she fell asleep, and Mary decided not to bother about plaiting her hair that night but curled up and hugged her and began to dream almost before she fell asleep. In fact, she answered "Yes, very exciting" out loud in the dream and it woke her and she had to go to sleep all over again.

In his little room at the back Hans sat in his shirt on the edge of the bed, eating some patties, a leg of chicken and a chunk of almond jelly out of a napkin stained with claret spread on his knees. He had had supper with the women servants, but these were his pickings.

"Ha! Ha! *das war lustig!*" He munched and licked his fingers. He felt an oily glow all over him. Then he lay down and began to snore,

Sleeping House

tossing about in his sleep. His toes stuck out from the blanket like a comic picture.

The servants lay side by side in the narrow iron bed. Cook blew out the candle and sighed and settled.

"I must say I do feel lively," said Zaidee and tittered a bit. "You know that young fellow who gave us the glad eye. He's a farm boy. Gave him the rough side of my tongue, I did. See 'is tie? Lord! Flashy, I called him. Keep off it! Flashy, I said. He did look *silly*."

But Cook hadn't seen his tie. She had been too busy bending over the oven. Yes, that was her job. She never got a sight of anything, and small thanks too. Where would they be without her, she'd like to know? For she saw herself bending over the oven, stooping over the table, cutting things—bringing things out, slaving, never looking up and everybody laughing and having jokes round her. But she was frightened of answering Zaidee crossly. If you answered a person crossly and they died in the night you were to blame for ever afterwards. She was always believing things like that.

"Oh, life, I am tired!" said Cook and turned to the wall.

Now everybody in the house was asleep except Eleanor. "I shall never go to sleep again." She clasped her arms over her head. She had a strange feeling that she floated, floated in the dark. Her eyes shone. She could not stop smiling and she could not grow calm. "Calm—yes, I must grow

Scrapbook 1914

calm." But it was impossible. "I shall never grow calm again." Her heart beat *Philip, Philip*, like a bell ringing in the alarm of battle. Yes, love was a battle. All confusion and excitement—a breathless, desperate thing. Looking into the future, Eleanor saw only Philip and herself, young and strong and shining, fighting the whole world, and crying and crying to each other "We have won". No, that didn't matter. It was the fighting that counted. "I have been a dark feeble thing, like a house lighted with one candle; but now there is a fire in every part of me, and I am strong, my love, my dear!"

There was no sound in the house any more nor any light save where the moon shone on the floors and ceilings, on the dismantled supper table, gleaming on the mirrors and the fading flowers. Silence hung over the garden, but the garden was awake. Its fruit and its flowers filled the air with a sweet wild scent. White and grey moths flew over the silvery branches of the syringa bushes. On the dark camellia trees flowers were poised like white and red birds.

So still and mysterious appeared the house under this old changeless light of moon, it seemed that the music and the dancing night had happened hundreds and hundreds of years ago. They who lay so quietly in it might never wake again.

December 18, 1914. That decides me, that frees me. I'll play this game no longer. I created the situation—very well, I'll do the other thing with moderate care,—and before it is too late. That's

The Parting

all. He has made me feel like a girl. I've loved, loved just like any girl,—but I'm not a girl, and these feelings are not mine. For him I am hardly anything except a gratification and a comfort. Of course, G. doesn't know me through him. He doesn't know me himself—or want to. I submit, that's true. But I'm not Colette, nor even Lesley. Jack, Jack, we are not going to stay together. I know that as well as you do. Don't be afraid of hurting me. What we have got each to kill—is my *you* and your *me*. That's all. Let's do it nicely and go to the funeral in the same carriage, and hold hands hard over the new grave, and smile and wish each other luck. I can. And so can you. Yes, I have already said Adieu to you now.

Darling, it has been lovely. We shall never forget—no, never. Goodbye! When once I have left you I will be more remote than you can imagine. I see you and G. discussing the extraordinary *time* it lasted. But I am far away, and different from what you think.

1915

March. Cet héros aux cheveux longs qui, pendant des heures entières, gratte avec sa canne dans le sable; or, ayant besoin de vivre, crache un peu de sang, et, avec un long regard larmoyant mais satisfait, écrit le mot *Finis* sur la même sable grattée.

Like the old saints on some cathedral, *décollés*, but with crowns hanging over their collars.

I wrote twice that I should return to England on Tuesday. I nearly told the concierge. To-day it does not seem to matter. Perhaps because of the fact that J. never once says that he longs for me, is desolate without me—never calls me. He has been to me the being that in a solitary world held my hand, and I his—was real among the shadows. But to-night he is *not quite so real*. My impatience *et ma douleur* must seem exaggerated to him. Shall I go back? It depends entirely on him. I will not write so often or so much. I have been a little absurd.

(This old habit of 'jotting' has come back.)

"Perhaps it is only upon the approach of an outside soul that another's soul becomes

The Apple-Tree

invisible, and if she be caught unawares she will not have time to disappear." (Leon Shestov.)

That is what Tchegov aimed at.

"Sooner or later in all probability this habit will be abandoned. In the future, probably, writers will convince themselves and the public that any kind of artificial completion is absolutely superfluous." (Leon Shestov.)

Tchegov said so.

The Apple-Tree.

There were two orchards belonging to the old house. One, that we called the 'wild' orchard, lay beyond the vegetable garden; it was planted with bitter cherries and damsons and transparent yellow plums. For some reason it lay under a cloud; we never played there, we did not even trouble to pick up the fallen fruit; and there, every Monday morning, to the round open space in the middle, the servant girl and the washer-woman carried the wet linen—grandmother's nightdresses, father's striped shirts, the hired man's cotton trousers and the servant girl's 'dreadfully vulgar' salmon-pink flannelette drawers jigged and slapped in horrid familiarity.

But the other orchard, far away and hidden from the house, lay at the foot of a little hill and stretched right over to the edge of the paddocks—to the clumps of wattles bobbing yellow in the

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bright sun and the blue gums with their streaming sickle-shaped leaves. There, under the fruit trees, the grass grew so thick and coarse that it tangled and knotted in your shoes as you walked, and even on the hottest day it was damp to touch when you stopped and parted it this way and that, looking for windfalls—the apples marked with a bird's beak, the big bruised pears, the quinces, so good to eat with a pinch of salt, but so delicious to smell that you could not bite for sniffing. . . .

One year the orchard had its Forbidden Tree. It was an apple-tree discovered by father and a friend during an after-dinner prowling one Sunday afternoon.

"Great Scott!" said the friend, lighting upon it with every appearance of admiring astonishment: "Isn't that a ——?" And a rich, splendid name settled like an unknown bird on the tree.

"Yes, I believe it is," said father lightly. He knew nothing whatever about the names of fruit trees.

"Great Scott!" said the friend again: "They're wonderful apples. Nothing like 'em—and you're going to have a tip-top crop. Marvellous apples! You can't beat 'em!"

"No, they're very fine—very fine," said father carelessly, but looking upon the tree with new and lively interest.

"They're rare—they're very rare. Hardly ever see 'em in England nowadays," said the visitor and set a seal on father's delight. For father was a self-made man and the price he had

The Apple-Tree

to pay for everything was so huge and so painful that nothing rang so sweet to him as to hear his purchase praised. He was young and sensitive still. He still wondered whether in the deepest sense he got his money's worth. He still had hours when he walked up and down in the moonlight half deciding to "chuck this confounded rushing to the office every day—and clear out—clear out once and for all." And now to discover that he'd a valuable apple-tree thrown in with the orchard—an apple-tree that this Johnny from England positively envied!

"Don't touch that tree! Do you hear me, children!" said he, bland and firm; and when the guest had gone, with quite another voice and manner:

"If I catch either of you touching those apples you shall not only go to bed—you shall each have a good sound whipping." Which merely added to its magnificence.

Every Sunday morning after church father, with Bogey and me tailing after, walked through the flower garden, down the violet path, past the lace-bark tree, past the white rose and syringa bushes, and down the hill to the orchard. The apple-tree—like the Virgin Mary—seemed to have been miraculously warned of its high honour, standing apart from its fellows, bending a little under its rich clusters, fluttering its polished leaves, important and exquisite before father's awful eye. His heart swelled to the sight—we knew his heart swelled. He put his hands behind his back and screwed up his eyes in the

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way he had. There it stood—the accidental thing—the thing that no one had been aware of when the hard bargain was driven. It hadn't been counted in, hadn't in a way been paid for. If the house had been burned to the ground at that time it would have meant less to him than the destruction of his tree. And how we played up to him, Bogey and I,—Bogey with his scratched knees pressed together, his hands behind his back, too, and a round cap on his head with 'H.M.S. Thunderbolt' printed across it.

The apples turned from pale green to yellow; then they had deep pink stripes painted on them, and then the pink melted all over the yellow, reddened, and spread into a fine clear crimson.

At last the day came when father took out of his waistcoat pocket a little pearl pen-knife. He reached up. Very slowly and very carefully he picked two apples growing on a bough.

"By Jove! They're warm," cried father in amazement. "They're wonderful apples! Tip-top! Marvellous!" he echoed. He rolled them over in his hands.

"Look at that!" he said. "Not a spot—not a blemish!" And he walked through the orchard with Bogey and me stumbling after, to a tree-stump under the wattles. We sat, one on either side of father. He laid one apple down, opened the pearl pen-knife and neatly and beautifully cut the other in half.

"By Jove! Look at that!" he exclaimed.

"Father!" we cried, dutiful but really enthusi-

The Apple-Tree

astic, too. For the lovely red colour had bitten right through the white flesh of the apple; it was pink to the shiny black pips lying so justly in their scaly pods. It looked as though the apple had been dipped in wine.

"Never seen *that* before," said father. "You won't find an apple like that in a hurry!" He put it to his nose and pronounced an unfamiliar word. "Bouquet! What a bouquet!" And then he handed to Bogey one half, to me the other.

"Don't *bolt* it!" said he. It was agony to give even so much away. I knew it, while I took mine humbly and humbly Bogey took his.

Then he divided the second with the same neat beautiful little cut of the pearl knife.

I kept my eyes on Bogey. Together we took a bite. Our mouths were full of a floury stuff, a hard, faintly bitter skin—a horrible taste of something dry. . . .

"Well?" asked father, very jovial. He had cut his two halves into quarters and was taking out the little pods. "Well?"

Bogey and I stared at each other, chewing desperately. In that second of chewing and swallowing a long silent conversation passed between us—and a strange meaning smile. We swallowed. We edged near father, just touching him.

"Perfect!" we lied. "Perfect—father! Simply lovely!"

But it was no use. Father spat his out and never went near the apple-tree again.

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Maata.

They did not fall like leaves—they fell like feathers—fluttering and floating from the trees that lined the road. Who was it used to say that every leaf you caught meant a happy month? Rhody, of course. She saw Rhody, the tall school girl, break from the 'crocodile' when they walked in the Park, and run after the leaves, with big, far too big gestures, as though she expected the whole tree to fall into her arms. Rhody used to keep the leaves in her Bible, and take them out and hold them up to the light and gaze at them in Scripture lessons. And she always said she knew each one apart. Well, if she said so—she did. Just like her.

The clock in the big Church struck five. But she did not hurry. Idle and happy she walked under the falling leaves. A sharp sweet scent was in the air, and a stronger, more wintry smell of damp earth. She could feel the mist on her eyelids and lips. The sensation of boundless strength and happiness flowed over her again. It was almost physical—her lungs felt like wings, she could fly away on a deep breath, light and strong.

"Oh, I am glad. Now I am myself again—now I am *quite safe*," she said, like a little child that wakes in its bed after a nightmare. And she thought: "If I could only remember always that under everything there is only this—that everything that is not this is on the surface and will not really matter in the end. What is life really? What is real and not real? Oh God!"

Loneliness

Came troubled sounds, familiar yet unreal, like the memory and the promise of sadness. They shook her heart. She did not want to listen. She could have listened for ever. Standing there in the dark she drifted away to that shadowy loneliness which sometimes seemed to her to be her only true life—the only changeless truth—the thing that she was never really certain was not reality after all. How extraordinary! She saw herself, all these last weeks, playing a part — being Maata — being herself, carefully caring for things that after all didn't matter at all! Why only that afternoon—a minute or two ago, she had believed it all—and it was nothing, nothing.

Fragment.

“... Standing whistling for a taxi like a forlorn rooster piping before break of day . . . or that, although you did talk so amazingly about Stendhal, your hat was too small. *Enfin*, you are ridiculous in some way, and I am hurt, I am hurt.” I have not said a bit what I mean to say—it's so difficult to explain—I've only hinted. *Do* you ever feel like that about the world? Of course, this sensitiveness has its reverse side, but that, for some extraordinary reason, has never anything to do with present people, but is nearly always connected with things. To-day, for instance, in my search for a lovely coloured rug, very bright and silky to touch, with perhaps a pattern of wild fruit

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trees growing on the borders of a lake and gay-coloured beasts standing on the brink—for not more than fifteen shillings at the outside—I found myself in a carpet shop. . . .

The Dark Hollow.

“You’re a sweet creature, aren’t you?” said Nina, getting on to a chair so that she would see her waist in front and behind in the little mirror. “What are you staring at the ceiling for? Money won’t fall through the ceiling on to the quilt, you know!” She got off the chair, and suddenly such a flame of rage leapt up in her that she trembled all over. “And you bloody well won’t milk me any longer!” she muttered. He did not move even his eyes. “I’ve done with you!” She jerked open a drawer, and grubbing among the bits of finery for a little black veil—“done with you,” she repeated. Just as she was going out of the door there came a sort of chuckle from the bed. “‘Toodle-oo!’” said the voice. She flounced round and tossed her head. “What’s that? What’s that you say?” But he was staring at the ceiling again. She turned to go and the chuckle was repeated. “‘Toodle-oo!’” mocked the voice. Her knees trembled so horribly that she could hardly walk down the five flights of dark winding stairs.

It was dusk in the streets and a fine, misty rain was falling. The lights from the cafés and street lamps showed like great blurred splodges of blue and yellow. The traffic trailed up and down the

The Dark Hollow

greasy road, and people, muffled up to the eyes, passed and repassed Nina, all going quickly to—somewhere or other. She too walked quickly, copying them, pretending. It was very cold. She felt the rain on her face and hands and then on her shoulders and knees. “And I haven’t even an umbrella!” Good God! that seemed the last straw. “Not even an umbrella!” She walked faster still, holding her handkerchief up to her lips. Where was she going to or what was she going to do—she had not the slightest idea. She would walk until she was tired, and then—her thoughts dropped into a dark hollow. But a faint voice came from the hollow: “This has happened to you before and will happen again and again—and again.” Oh, how tired she was! “I wonder *where* I am.” She stopped under the awning of a flower-shop and peered into the road. But how could she tell? “It’s a street, *ma chérie*, and that’s all there is to be said for it.” With a faint smile on her lips she turned and looked in at the flower-shop window. As she watched an arm was thrust among the flowers and a hand hovered over some bunches of violets, closing finally on the very smallest. “Someone’s busting the bank. I wouldn’t mind betting you the money I haven’t got, that’s a woman.” She was quite silly with tiredness. “Right, of course!” At that moment a girl came to the shop door with the violets tucked in her jacket and stood fumbling with the catch of her umbrella. Nina’s eyes widened. She moved nearer, staring. Was it? . . . it couldn’t be . . . yes, it was!

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"Louise!" she cried.

"Nina!" cried the girl in a charming, happy voice. "How extraordinary! Is it really Nina?"

"Yes, really," and Nina nodded, her eyes very big and black behind the lace veil.

"But," said Louise, "are you living here? Where are you going to, now?"

She wanted to answer "Nowhere in particular," but somehow—her voice had gone and she could only point to her throat with a strange, quivering smile.

"What's the matter? Are you ill?"

She managed to whisper "A little bit tired," and Louise saw big bright tears falling down her cheeks.

"Come home with me," she said quickly. "Come home with me, now. I live quite close to here." She put her arm round Nina. "Child, you're wet through! Don't tremble so, you poor little thing. It's just down this road and across the court—in here." She half carried Nina up the stairs to the door of her flat. At the door Nina held back a moment.

"Is there anybody . . ."

"No," said Louise, "no, dear, you needn't see anybody. Come," and she opened a door at the end of a narrow passage into a room half lit by an open fire. "Take off your things while I go and get the lamp," said Louise.

But Nina crouched down by the fire and her weeping changed to sobbing, to a dreadful half sobbing, half coughing that she could not stop. Without a word Louise knelt down. She took

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off Nina's hat, raised her a little and pulled off the wet jacket; she slipped down beside her and took Nina's dark head on her lap and stroked her hair and her cheeks with firm, loving fingers. Ah! how good that felt! Her sobbing changed to long sighs, and finally she lay still with her eyes shut, her head pressed against Louise. 'And she doesn't even wear a corset. *Quel courage!*' thought Nina.

"Now you're better, aren't you? Are you feeling warmer?" said the kind, charming voice. Nina nodded and under her sleepy content her brain began to be busy with . . . what to tell Louise. She sat up, half opened her eyes and smiled shyly.

"I'm dreadfully ashamed," she said. Louise got up and leaned against the mantelpiece and looked at the fire.

"Don't bother to apologise," she said, "and don't bother to explain. You'd only—make up a story, you know, and neither of us would be any the wiser."

"Oh, no!" said Nina. "No, I shouldn't, not to you. Why should I make up stories to you? But there's nothing to tell," she said—"nothing." Louise put out her foot and kicked a piece of wood into sparks. In the quiet they heard the rain threshing against the window.

"What I mean is," said Nina, "there's no sort of a story."

Louise was still silent; unseen by her Nina made a little grimace. 'She thinks it will do me good to get it off my mind', she thought, slyly.

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"Louise," she put her hand lightly on the other's arm. "Let me tell you." Louise nodded but did not look up. "Well, you know, after I left school," said Nina, speaking in a low rapid voice, "I hadn't any home to go to, you remember, I never really knew who my people were—some one paid for me—*c'était tout*. And, you heard, didn't you? I went on the stage."

"Yes, I heard that," said Louise.

"I had—pretty good luck at first," said Nina, "but then I got ill, and my voice went—and a hard time came," she said. "And then you know, out of pure cowardice—yes, really—I couldn't fight any more and I hadn't the courage to—I married." Louise turned her grave glance to her. "I didn't love him a bit," said Nina, shaking her head,—“just because I was afraid.”

"All right, I understand," said Louise. Nina looked away from her, her voice hardened.

"And then—oh well, it served me right—he was a brute and my—" she just hesitated a second, "my baby died and I left him."

"Oh," whispered Louise.

"And I went on the stage again, and worked and had a bigger fight than before, because—I was—lonely in a different way, until—" she walked right away from Louise and over to the window and lifted the curtain and looked out—"until now," she said and laughed shortly.

"How do you mean?" said Louise.

"Oh, my dear," said Nina, very flippant, "I've been out of work six weeks. I've not got a sou. I'm so tired that the agents won't look at

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me, and now this afternoon, the crisis came. The landlady told me she'd let my room. She kept all the clothes I had left to pay for my rent—and turned me out with one shilling which I gave to the poor little chambermaid as I walked down the stairs. Pretty— isn't it? And she turned me into the rainy court." 'Mon Dieu! have I overdone it,' she thought. 'Was the shilling a mistake?'

Said Louise, very thoughtfully: "I say, Nina, how old are you?"

"Twenty-two," said Nina. "Why?"

"Well, you left school when you were sixteen and you've been married to a beast and had a baby and been earning your living for six years. Not exactly gay, is it?"

Thank God, she had believed it all. "No, I don't suppose it is," said Nina.

Another pause—"Well, what are you going to do now?" said Louise, and she came up to Nina and put her hand on the back of Nina's neck and ruffled up her short black hair. "Stay with us for a while, will you?" she said, "and see how things turn out. *Us* is I and a man called David Field. We've been living together for the last three years." She was very cool.

"But—but how can I?" said Nina. "I don't believe you realise, Louise. I haven't anything at all. *No* clothes," she said, "*no* money. I'm just as I am, I might be a kitten!"

"Yes, I do realise that," said Louise, "and I can quite understand you don't want to be a

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charity child. Well, you needn't. But I've got a little money put by—there's a tiny room here with a camp bed in it and you can pay me back whatever you cost me when you're in luck again. That's simple enough. It's no good being sentimental when one is really in a tight place—is it? And, quite apart from that," said Louise, "I'd like to have you. I think you've had a rotten time. I'd like to feed you up and make you happy and spoil you and turn you into the old Nina again."

"But Mr. . . ." Nina hesitated.

"Oh, *David*?" laughed Louise. "David's all right. Don't bother about *him*. Tell me what you want to do."

Nina said, very frankly, looking straight into Louise's eyes—"I want to stay. You know I'll pay you back. Yes, I want to stay."

"Good," said Louise, "I'm glad. Now we needn't talk about it again. Come away from that rainy window. I don't know what *you* feel like, but *I* want some tea."

"Oh, look," said Nina tragically, "look at my dress." Her little dark-blue silk frock was stained with black patches of rain.

"Take it off," said Louise. "I'll go and find you something to put on. Bother!" She looked at Nina standing in her short petticoat by the fire. "I'm too staid for you. You're such a little beauty. You *are* a lovely little being."

"Oh," Nina protested.

"I'd like to wrap you up in David's Chinese silk portière. Well—wait, I'll find you something."

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They were spreading over the camp bed a red and white Indian cover when they heard the front door open and steps in the hall.

"That's David," whispered Louise, smiling. "Stay here while I go and explain. You don't mind?"

"Of course not." Nina curled up on the bed. She heard voices. "Hallo, Davy." "Hallo, Lou. Hasn't it been a rotten day?" "Yes, there's a lovely fire in your room." "Good, come on in and talk." Then the sound of a door shutting.

Quiet as a little cat crouched Nina. She scarcely seemed to breathe, but her eyes were busy, taking in every detail of her room—the low chair with its pretty striped pillows, the gold paper screen hiding the washstand, the black chest of drawers covered with a strip of Indian embroidery, the books, the long blue curtain drawn across the window. A lamp stood on the table by the bed. It had a green shade with tiny red apples painted on it, and she looked at her hands lying small and rosy in the ring of soft light. 'I must come of a good stock,' she decided. 'My wrists and my ankles are so fine.' A mysterious sense of well-being filled her. It did not matter how long this lasted. At any rate for the time she had dropped out of her own world and all its beastliness, and that was enough. Never look into the future or you will find the future is looking at you. . . . The funny thing was that Louise had believed her story—had taken it all so simply and naturally that Nina began to have a faint feel-

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ing that it was true. She saw herself, little and brave, going to agent after agent. Quite plainly she saw the brute of a husband—there wasn't any difficulty in imagining him, but even the baby was there, pale, with big solemn eyes, lying across her lap. 'But the crying. I did not put that on. No, I could not help that. How I sobbed!' she thought admiringly, and yawned and stretched herself, thinking of nothing at all, until Louise called, "Come and show yourself, Nina!"

David sat down at the piano and struck a succession of quick light chords. He looked at Louise. "What shall I play?" he said, half petulantly, in the voice of a spoilt child.

"Play the Sibelius Sonata."

"Do you want that?"

She nodded, and he smiled at her and began to play. Louise lay back in her chair, her arms stretched along the sides and her hands drooping. In the dim light, her face with half-shut eyes was like a beautiful soft mask. She was very lovely lying and listening; but "I am happy. I am at peace with myself, I am safe . . ."—in the very way she breathed one could tell that of Louise.

'It is love,' thought Nina. 'Of course, it is love that gives her that air. But what sort of love? What can there be in that conceited boy to keep one satisfied three years? She doesn't mother him and . . . no, he's not the grand bébé type. Is Louise frightfully passionate? Do those two when they are alone—Oh no, it isn't

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possible. And besides Louise had not the chic and the certainty for a really great affair. I do not understand them at all—at all—' thought Nina, half angry, folding herself up in a corner of the sofa.

David had come to the second movement, the slow movement that is based on a folk song and is so sad and so lovely. His proud head was tilted back a little the better to listen. . . .

1916

Notes for Prelude.

In the scurely, as Lottie says.

Look out now, Rags! Don't you touch that when I'm not here. If you put the tip of your finger into that, it 'ud wither your hand off!

"We came over with Mum on the bus and were going to stay to dinner. What time is dinner at your new place?"

"The same time as we always used to have it," said Lottie. "When the bell rings."

"Pooh! that isn't what time," said Pip. "We always have our dinner hal' pas' twelve. Let's go round to the kitchen and ask your servant what time yours is."

"We're not allowed to go into the kitchen in the morning," said Isabel. "We have to keep away from the back of the house."

"Well, Rags and I can, because we're visitors. Come on, Rags!"

But when they had passed through the side gate, opening with a big iron ring, that led into the courtyard, they forgot all about asking the servant.

"What do you have for dinner?"

Notes for Prelude

"The same as we always used to have," said Lottie, "except we have cold milk instead of water to drink."

Mrs. Trout, she was a widow. Her husband had died five years before, and immediately upon his death, before he was cold, she had married again, far more thoroughly and more faithfully than she ever had married him.

The Journey Home.

The Aloe. . . .

Stanley Burnell: Beryl plays the guitar.

The Samuel Josephs; the Journey and Supper; Bed for all. Dan; Burnell courting Linda; Mrs. Burnell and Beryl; Kezia; The Aloe.

Stanley Burnell drives home; the Nursery; Beryl with a guitar; Children; Alice; The Trout sisters; Mrs. Trout's latest novel; Cribbage; Linda and her Mother.

Really thirteen chapters.

They cut down the stem when Linda is ill. She has been counting on the flowering of the Aloe.

That Woman.

Sitting astride the bow window ledge, smelling the heliotrope—or was it the sea?—half of Kezia was in the garden and half of her in the room.

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"Have you put down the Harcourts?"

"Yes, Mrs. Phil and Mrs. Charlie."

"And the Fields?"

"Mrs. *and* the Misses Field."

"And Rose Conway?"

"Yes, and that Melbourne girl staying with her."

"Old Mrs. Grady?"

"Do you think—necessary?"

"My dear, she does so love a good cackle."

"Oh, but that way she has of dipping everything in her tea! Iced chocolate cake and the ends of her feather boa dipped in tea. . . ."

"How marvellously that ribbon has lasted, Harrie! Marvellously!"

That was Aunt Beryl's voice. She, Aunt Harrie and Mother sat at the round table with big shallow teacups in front of them.

In the dusky light, in their white puffed-up muslin blouses with wing sleeves, they were three birds at the edge of a lily pond. Beyond them the shadowy room melted into the shadow; the gold picture frames were traced upon the air; the cut-glass door-knob glittered; a song—a white butterfly with wings outspread—clung to the ebony piano.

Aunt Harrie's plaintive, singing tones: "It's very faded, really, if you look into it. I don't think it can possibly stand another ironing."

"If I were rich," said Aunt Beryl, "with real money to spend—not save" . . .

"What about—what about asking that Gibbs woman?"

Kezia and Tui

"Linda!"

"How can you suggest such a thing!"

"Well, why not? She needn't come. But it must be so horrid not to be asked anywhere!"

"But, good heavens, whose fault is it? Who could ask her?"

"She's nobody but herself to blame."

"She's simply flown in people's faces."

"And it must be so particularly dreadful for Mr. Gibbs."

"But Harrie, dear, he's dead."

"Of course, Linda, that's just it. He must feel so helpless, looking down."

Kezia heard her mother say: "I never thought of that. Yes, that might be . . . very maddening!"

Aunt Beryl's cool little voice gushed up and overflowed: "It's really nothing to laugh at, Linda. There are some things one really must draw the line at."

Kezia and Tui.

All that day school seemed unreal and silly to Kezia. Round and round, like a musical box with only one tune, went her mind on what had happened the evening before. Her head ached with trying to remember every little detail and every word. She did not want to remember—but somehow, she could not stop trying. She answered questions and made mistakes in her sums and recited "How Horatius kept the Bridge" like a little girl in a dream. The day

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crawled by. "That was the first time I've ever stood up to him," she thought. "I wonder if everything will be different now. We can't even pretend to like each other again." Bottlenose! Bottlenose! She smiled again remembering the word, but at the same time she felt frightened. She had not seen her father that morning. The Grandmother told her that he had promised not to mention the subject again. "But I didn't believe that," thought Kezia. "I wish it hadn't happened. No, I'm glad it has . . . I wish that he was dead—Oh, what Heaven that would be for us!" But she could not imagine that sort of person dying. She remembered suddenly the way he sucked in his moustache when he drank and the long hairs he had on his hands, and the noises he made when he had indigestion—No, that sort of person seemed too real to die. She worried the thought of him until she was furious with rage. "How I detest him—detest him!" The class stood up to sing. Kezia shared a book with Tui.

"O forest, green and fair,
O pine-trees waving high,
How sweet their cool retreat,
How full of rest!"

sang the little girls. Kezia looked out through the big bare windows to the wattle trees, their gold tassels nodding in the sunny air, and suddenly the sad tune and the trees moving so gently made her feel quite calm. She looked down at the withered sweet-pea that

Kezia and Tui

drooped from her blouse. She saw herself sitting on the Grandmother's lap and leaning against the Grandmother's bodice. That was what she wanted. To sit there and hear Grannie's watch ticking against her ear and bury her face in the soft warm place smelling of lavender and put up her hand and feel the five owls sitting on the moon.

Mrs. Fairfield was in the garden when she came home—stooping over the pansies. She had a little straw basket on her arm, half filled with flowers. Kezia went up to her and leant against her and played with her spectacle case.

"Sweetheart, listen," she said. "It's no good saying I'm sorry because I'm not. And I'm not ashamed either. It's no good trying to make me." Her face grew hard. "I *hate* that man and I won't pretend. But because you're more—" she hesitated, groping for the word, "more *valuable* than he is, I won't behave like that again—not unless I absolutely feel I can't help it, Grannie." She looked up and smiled. "See?"

"I can't make you do what you don't want to, Kezia," said Mrs. Fairfield.

"No," said she. "Nobody can, can they? Otherwise it wouldn't be any good wanting anything for your own self—would it? Aren't the pansies pretties, Grannie? I'd like to make pets of them."

"I think they're rather like my little scar-mouch in the face," said Mrs. Fairfield, smiling and pulling Kezia's pink ear.

"Oh, thank goodness!" sighed Kezia. "You're

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yourself again. We've made it up, haven't we? I can't bear being serious for a long time together. Oh my Grannie, I've got to be happy with you. When I go thinking of serious things I could poke out my tongue at myself." She took Mrs. Fairfield's hand and stroked it. "You do love me, don't you?"

"Of course, you silly billy."

"We-ell," laughed Kezia. "That's the only real thing, isn't it?"

"There are two bits of cold pudding inside for you and Tui," said Mrs. Fairfield. "Run along and take it to her while I finish the ironing. I only came out while the iron was getting hot."

"You won't be wretched if I leave you alone?" asked Kezia. She danced into the house, found the pudding and danced over to the Beads'.

"Mrs. Bead! Tui! where are you?" she called, stepping over a saucepan, two big cabbages and Tui's hat and coat inside the kitchen door.

"We're upstairs. I'm washing my hair in the bathroom. Come up, darling," cooed Tui. Kezia bounded up the stairs. Mrs. Bead in a pink flannel dressing-gown sat on the edge of the bath, and Tui stood in torn calico drawers, a towel round her shoulders and her head in a basin.

"Hallo, Mrs. Bead," said Kezia. She buried her head in the Maori woman's neck and put her teeth in a roll of soft fat. Mrs. Bead pulled Kezia between her knees and had a good look at her.

"Well, Tui," she said, "you are a little fibber.

Kezia and Tui

Tui told me you'd had a fight with your father and he'd given you two black eyes."

"I didn't—I didn't," cried Tui, stamping. "No one is looking after me. Pour a jug of water on my head, Mummy. Oh, Kezia, don't listen to her."

"Pooh! it's nothing new," said Kezia. "You're always lying. I'll pour the water over your head." She rolled up her sleeves and deluged Tui, who gave little moaning cries.

"I'm drowned, drowned, drowned," she said, wringing out her long black hair.

"You have a lot of it," said Kezia.

"Yes." Tui twisted it round her head. "But I shan't be content till it is down to my knees. Don't you think it would be nice to be able to wrap yourself up in your hair?"

"What funny ideas you have," said Kezia, considering Tui. "Mrs. Bead, don't you think Tui's getting awfully conceited?"

"Oh, not more than she ought to," said Mrs. Bead, stretching herself and yawning. "I believe in girls thinking about their appearance. Tui could do a lot with herself if she liked."

"Well, she doesn't think about anything else, do you, Tui?"

"No, darling," Tui smiled.

"Well, why should she?" remarked Mrs. Bead easily. "She's not like you, Kezia. She hasn't got any brain for books, but she's real smart in making up complexion mixtures and she keeps her feet as neat as her hands."

"When I grow up," said Tui, "I mean to be a

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terri-fic beauty. Mother's going to take me to Sydney when I'm sixteen—but I mean to be the rage if I die for it. And then I'm going to marry a rich Englishman and have five little boys with beautiful blue eyes."

"Well, you never know," said Mrs. Bead. "And if you turn out into a raging beauty, Tui, I'll take you to Sydney, sure. What a pity you couldn't come too, Kezia."

"We'd make such an uncommon pair," suggested Tui. Kezia shook her head.

"No, Grannie and I are going to live by ourselves when I grow up, and I'm going to make money out of flowers and vegetables and bees."

"But don't you want to be rich?" cried Tui, "and travel all over the world and have perfect clothes? Oh, dear, if I thought I was going to live all my life with Mummy in this piggy little house I believe I'd die of grief."

"Yes, that's a good thing about you, Tui," said Mrs. Bead. "Though you're lazy like me, you want a lot to be lazy on; and you're quite right, dearie, quite right. I made a great mistake coming to a little town like this. But then I'd got sick of things and I had enough money to keep us, and once I got the furniture in here I seemed to lose heart, somehow. You ought to have ambition, Kezia, but I think you'll come on slower than Tui. You do keep skinny, don't you," said Mrs. Bead. "Why, Tui's got quite a figure beside you."

"She hasn't got any front at all, Mummy," gurgled Tui. "Have you, chérie? Mummy, go

Kezia and Tui

downstairs and make us some cocoa, and I'll get dressed and come down to finish my hair at the fire."

Mrs. Bead left the two little girls. They went into Tui's bedroom.

"Look!" said Tui. "Doesn't it surprise you? Mummy and I fixed it yesterday." The shabby untidy little room had changed to suit Tui's romantic mood. White muslin curtains made out of an old skirt of her mother's adorned the bed, and everywhere Kezia looked there were pink sateen bows. Over the looking-glass, on the back of the chair, on the gas bracket and the four black iron bed-poles.

"Why don't you put a bow on each of the knobs of the chest of drawers," said Kezia, sarcastically, "and round the washstand jug, too!"

"Oh!" Tui's face fell. "Don't you like it, darling? We thought it was lovely. Mummy thought you'd think it fearfully artistic."

"I think it looks awful," said Kezia, "and just like you. You're off your head lately, Tui Bead."

"Really and truly you think so?" said Tui, making tragic eyes at herself in the looking-glass.

"Yes. Besides, if I were you, I would mend my drawers first," she answered, scorning Tui's eyes.

"I wonder what makes you so hard, hard, hard. You're never nice to me now, Kezia."

"Yes, I am. But you're so dotty. You seem to be getting all different."

"Darling," Tui put her arm round Kezia's waist, "in my heart I'm just the same. Feel my

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hair. Do you think I've washed it successfully. Feel this bit. Is it silky?" Kezia gave it a pull.

"It's nearly as soft as you."

"Come along downstairs, you kids," called Mrs. Bead. "And, Kezia, you can take a piece of my cocoanut cake to your Grandma. It hasn't riz at all and it's a little damp in the middle, but the ingredients are all the best quality."

It was dark when she left the Beads'. She went home by the front way through their weedy garden and out of the gate into their own. Hawk Street was quiet. All over the sky there were little stars and the garden with its white flowers looked as though it were steeped in milk. The blinds were pulled down in their house but lamplight shone from the sitting-room and she knew her Father was there. But she did not care.

"What a lovely thing night is," thought Kezia. "I wish I could stay out here and watch it." She bent her face over the spicy arum lilies and could not have enough of their scent. "I shall *remember* just this moment," decided the little girl. "I shall always remember what I like and forget what I don't like." How still and quiet it was! She could hear the dew dripping off the leaves. "I wonder," she thought, dreamy and grave, looking up at the stars, "I wonder if there really *is* a God!"

The Possessed.

"'Ha ha!' Karmazinov got up from the sofa, wiping his mouth with a table-napkin, and came forward to kiss him with an air

The Eternal Harmony

of unmixed delight—after the characteristic fashion of Russians if they are very illustrious.”

Not only Russians!

“‘Surely you must see that I am in the agonies of childbirth,’ she said, sitting up and gazing at him with a terrible, hysterical vindictiveness that distorted her whole face. ‘I curse him before he is born, this child!’”

This ‘vindictiveness’ is *profoundly* true.

“‘There are seconds—they come five or six at a time—when you suddenly feel the presence of the eternal harmony perfectly attained. It’s something not earthly—I don’t mean in the sense that it’s heavenly—but in that sense that man cannot endure it in his earthly aspect. He must be physically changed or die. This feeling is clear and unmistakable; it’s as though you apprehend all nature and suddenly say, ‘Yes, that’s right.’ God, when he created the world, said at the end of each day of creation, ‘Yes, it’s right, it’s good.’ It . . . it’s not being deeply moved, but simply joy. You don’t forgive anything because there is no more need for forgiveness. It’s not that you love—oh, there’s something in it higher than love—what’s most awful is that it’s terribly clear and such joy. If it lasted more than five seconds, the soul could not endure it and must perish. In those five seconds I live through a lifetime, and I’d give my whole life for them, because they are worth it. To

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endure ten seconds one must be physically changed. I think man ought to give up having children—what's the use of children, what's the use of evolution when the goal has been attained? In the gospel it is written that there will be no child-bearing in the resurrection, but that men will be like the angels of the Lord. That's a hint. Is your wife bearing a child?"

I know that.

The Idiot.

· "Do you know that she may love you now more than anyone, and in such a way that the more she torments you, the more she loves you? She won't tell you so, but you must know how to see it. When all's said and done, why else is she going to marry you? Some day she will tell you so herself. Some women want to be loved like that, and that's just her character. And your love and your character must impress her! Do you know that a woman is capable of torturing a man with her cruelty and mockery without the faintest twinge of conscience, because she'll think every time she looks at you: 'I'm tormenting him to death now, but I'll make up for it with my love later.'"

"She says to me: 'Tell them I won't marry you without that. When they've gone to

church, we'll go to church.' I can't make out what it means, and I never have understood; she either loves you beyond all reckoning, or . . . If she does love you, why does she want to marry you to some one else? She says, 'I want to see him happy,' so she must love you."

Lines from Shakespeare.

"When I was at home, I was in a better place;
But travellers must be content."

"I like this place
And willingly would waste my time in it."

"Dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage."

"Out of this nettle danger
We pluck this flower safety."

"But that the *scambling* and unquiet time . . ."

"But when he speaks
The air, a chartered libertine, is still."

"If you would walk off, I'd prick your guts a little in good terms as I may; and that's the humour of it."

"Why the devil should we keep knives to cut one another's throats?"

"I cannot kiss; that's the humour of it—but adieu."

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March.

I must not go on thinking like this. My thoughts are all of Chaddie¹—of our meeting on Monday, of what we shall say and how we shall look. I keep wondering what I shall do if the boat arrives in the middle of the night, or what I shall do if someone robs me while I am there. A thousand different thoughts. And what she will say, and if she will expect me. These thoughts fly through my head like mad things. They never finish; and then there is always the idea that I may, by some awful error, miss her—it isn't possible—and what we shall do when we *do* meet. This is sheer sin, for I ought to be writing my book, and instead I am pretending here.

But all these various things are really, really very difficult to keep up the fight against. And the desire for mid-day and an omelette is really awful. I'm hungry beyond words. An omelette—hot coffee—bread and butter and jam—I could cry at the very thought. Only you see, fool who is reading this, I went out awfully early. Before eight o'clock I was down in the village with my *filet* in my hand a-getting of the lunch and the dinner. And although it pleuvéd cats and dogs I marched about the land, and came back home a kind of hardened sinner.

¹ Two letters describing this journey to Marseilles to meet her sister, who was returning from India, will be found in *Letters*, Vol. I. pp. 65-66. The reference in the doggerel verses is to Katherine's trick of putting on the clock, unknown to me, in order to hasten lunch-time.

J. M. M.

Waiting for Lunch

For the *petits pois*, I really must confess,
Were sinfully expensive and I couldn't have bought less.
I *had* to buy a *demi-livre*, and that's by no means ample.
By the time that they've been shelled and cooked, *il ne*
reste plus qu'un sample.

Twenty to twelve, says our old clock.
It seems to talk and slyly mock
My hunger and my real distress
At giving way to wickedness.
Oh, say a quarter! Say ten to!
Whirr in the wheezy way you do
Before you strike! But no!
As I have frequently observed,
All clocks are deaf—this hasn't heard.
And, as it is, *grâce à* my guiding,
The brute is fast beyond all hiding.

It is really only seven
Minutes past a bare eleven!
Now Jack's got up and made a move . . .
But only to the shelves above.
He's settled down. Oh, what a blow!
I've still a good fifteen to go.
Before the brute has chimed well,
I may be dead and gone to hell.

Later: But it wasn't so bad as all that after ALL.
I struck work, and we had no end of a good feed,
and now it is two (by our clock), so I'll knock off
this rubbish and really settle down.

An unposted letter.

Dear Frieda: The new house [Higher
Treggerthen] sounds very nice, and I am glad

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to think we shall be there—all of us, together—this spring. Thank you for your letter, dear, but you really haven't been right in judging us first the kind of traitors that you did. J. *never* would hear a word against Lawrence.

“Spring comes with exquisite effort in England.” A.B.B. (?Anne Burnell Beauchamp, Katherine's mother.)

Sewing-Class.

Why can't I change my hair-ribbon on Wednesday afternoon? All the other girls are allowed to; and it can't be because Mother really thinks I shall lose my best one. I know a way to tie a hair-ribbon so that it simply can't possibly come off, and she knows I do, because she taught me herself.

But “No”, says Mother. “You may put on your threadwork pinafore, but you may not put on your blue satin hair-ribbon. Your ordinary brown velvet one is perfectly neat, suitable and unobtrusive as it is. (Mother loves sentences like this.) I can't help what *all the other* girls do. Have you got your thimble?”

“Yes, Mother, in my pocket.”

“Show it to me, dear.”

“I said, Mother, it was in my pocket.”

“Well, show it to me so that I can be perfectly sure.”

“Oh Mother, why *do* you treat me like a

Sewing-Class

baby? You always seem to forget on purpose that I'm in my teens. None of the other girls' Mothers . . ."

Oh well, I'll take my blue satin hair-ribbon in my pocket and change when I get to school. It serves Mother right. I don't want to deceive her, but she makes me deceive her, and she doesn't really care a bit—she only wants to show her power.

It was Wednesday afternoon. I love Wednesday afternoons. I simply adore them. We don't have any real school, only sewing class and elocution in the drawing-room for the girls who take private lessons. Everything is different on Wednesdays. Some of the older ones even wear Japanese silk blouses, and we change into our slippers and we all wash our hands at the lavatory basin in the passage. The ink-pots are put away by the monitors, the desks pushed against the wall. There is a long table down the middle of the room with two big straw baskets on it. The chairs are arranged in little groups. The windows are opened wide. Even the garden outside—with its beaten paths and its flowery bushes tumbled and draggled because the little ones will root under them for their balls—seems to change, to become real on Wednesdays. When we lift our heads to thread our needles the fuchsia is lifting and the camellias are white and red in the bright sun.

We are making cheap flannelette chemises for the Maori Mission. They are as long as night-dresses, very full, with huge armholes and a plain

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band round the neck—not even a lace edging. Those poor Maoris! they can't all be as fat as these chemises. But Mrs. Wallis, the Bishop's wife, said when she gave the newspaper pattern to the headmistress, "It is wiser to reckon on their being fat." The headmistress laughed very much and told Miss Burton, our class mistress, but Miss Burton is very fat herself so she blushed frightfully—of course, it was pure spite on the headmistress's part. Skinny little thing! I know she thinks she has got a lovely slim figure. You should see her pressing her little grey alpaca hips when she is talking to the curate before Scripture lesson.

But even she is not the same on Wednesday afternoons. Her grey alpaca dress is adorned with a black tulle bow. She wears a tall comb in her hair, and when she's not inspecting the sewing she sits at the end of the long table, her gold-rimmed eyeglasses hooked on her long peaked nose that has such funny little red veins at the end of it, and she reads Dickens aloud.

Our class-room is very big. The walls are free, so are the window sashes and the doors; and all the girls sit in their little cane chairs, their faces showing above a froth of cream flannelette; on their heads their best hair-ribbons perch and quiver. Their hands lift and fall as they sew those Maori Mission seams. Sometimes they sigh or May Swainson sneezes. Ever since she had an operation on her nose she is always sneezing. Or Madge Rothschild, who wears a glacé silk petticoat, gets up and rustles to the table for

Rose Eagle

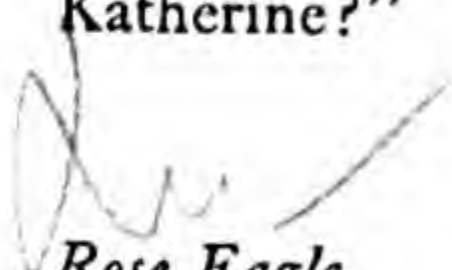
her scissors or some thread, or to ask if she has to turn down a selvedge.

But all the same it is quiet in the room, it is very quiet; and when the headmistress reads Dickens aloud, there is something so fascinating in her voice that I could listen for years and years. She is reading "David Copperfield". When there is a full-page illustration she passes the book round for us to look. One by one we put our sewing down. "Quickly, girls! Don't dawdle over it!"

How funny! The headmistress herself is exactly like one of those illustrations—so tiny, so spry. While she waits for the book to come back she sits polishing her eyeglasses on a handkerchief that is tucked between two hooks of her grey alpaca bodice. What does she remind me of? She reminds me of a bird and a donkey mixed. . . .

"Bring me that here to look at—will you, Katherine?"

(*March, 1916.*)



Rose Eagle.

It was wonderful how quickly Rose Eagle forgot the first fourteen years of her life. They were nothing but a dream, out of which she awakened to find herself sitting on her yellow tin box in the kitchen of her 'first place', with a queer shaking in her hands and knees and the hot blood burning and tightening her cheeks. She and the yellow tin box might have been

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washed through the back door into Mrs. Taylor's kitchen on the last wave of a sea-storm—so forlorn and unfamiliar they appeared, and she turned her head from side to side as though she were sensing quiet and stillness for the first time. . . .

It was late in the afternoon of a hot December day. The sun shone through the drawn blind in long pencil rays of light, over the floor and the face of the dresser and a church calendar picture of a dreamy young Jesus with an armful of lambs; and facing her sat Mrs. Taylor, changing the baby who sprawled on her lap, waving his hands and blowing bubbles. Mrs. Taylor kept on talking to Rose in a vague singing voice. The clock on the mantelpiece ticked sharply and a tap in the scullery tip-tipped like stealthy footsteps.

"Yes, m'm," said Rose Eagle, and "No, m'm," to all that Mrs. Taylor said.

"You will share Reggie's room, Rose. Reggie is my oldest boy. He is four and he has just started school. And now that you have come I'll give up having baby at night—he keeps me awake so. You're used to babies?"

"Oh, yes, m'm!"

"I really do not feel well enough to tell you your duties to-day," said Mrs. Taylor, languidly sticking safety-pins into the gurgling baby.

Rose Eagle got up and bent over Mrs. Taylor. "Here," she said, "give 'im to me," and as she straightened herself with the warm, fat lump in her arms, she felt frightened no longer. Baby Taylor

The New-born Son

was to Rose Eagle the saucer of milk to the stray cat. The fact of acceptance proved resignation.

"My word! what 'air 'e's got!" said Rose Eagle, cuddling him. "It's like black feathers."

Mrs. Taylor rose with her hands to her head. Tall and thin in her lilac cotton dress, she pushed back from her forehead the heaping black hair, with eyes half-shut and quivering lips.

"My! you do look bad!" said Rose, relishing this performance. "You go an' 'ave a lie down on your bed, m'm, an' I'll bring you a cup o' tea in a minute. I'll manage best ways I can."

She followed her mistress out of the kitchen, along the little passage, into the best bedroom. "Lie down! Take yer shoes off!" Mrs. Taylor submitted, sighing, and Rose Eagle tiptoed back into the kitchen.

This story seems to lack coherence and sharpness. That's the principal thing: it's not at all sharp. It's like eating a bunch of grapes instead of a grape of caviare. . . . I have a pretty bad habit of spreading myself at times—of overwriting and under-stating. It's just carelessness.

The New-born Son.

So that mysterious mother, faint with sleep,
Had given into her arms her new-born son,
And felt upon her bosom the cherished one
Breathe and stiffen his tiny limbs and weep.

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Her arms became as wings, folding him over
Into that lovely pleasance, and her heart
Beat like a tiny bell: "He is my lover,
He is my son, and we shall never part.
Never, never, never, never—but why?"
And she suddenly bowed her head and began to cry.

"When he had finished with the album, Von Koren took a pistol from the whatnot, *and screwing up his left eye, took deliberate aim at the portrait of Prince Vorontsov*, or stood still at the looking-glass and gazed a long time at his swarthy face, his big forehead and his black hair, which curled like a negro's. . . ."
(Tchehov: *The Duel*.)

1917

*The Lost Battle.*¹

Was it simply her own imagination, or could there be any truth in this feeling that waiters—waiters especially—and hotel servants adopted an impertinent, arrogant and slightly amused attitude towards a woman who travelled alone? Was it just her wretched female self-consciousness? No, she really did not think it was. For even when she was feeling her happiest, at her freest, she would become aware quite suddenly, of the 'tone' of the waiter or the hotel servant, and it was extraordinary how it wrecked her sense of security. It seemed to her that something malicious was being plotted against her, as though everybody and everything—yes, even to inanimate objects like chairs and tables—was secretly 'in the know'—waiting for that ominous, infallible thing to happen to her which always did happen, and which was bound to happen to every woman on earth who travelled alone.

The waiter prodded a keyhole with a bunch of keys, wrenched one round, flung the grey-painted door open, and stood against it, waiting for her to pass in. He held his feather duster upright in

¹ The first three paragraphs of this piece appear in the *Journal*, dated 1915, under the heading "Travelling Alone."

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his hand, as though it were a smoky torch he carried.

"Here is a nice little room for Madame," said the waiter insinuating. He flung open the groaning window, and unhooked the shutters, letting a cold shadowless light flow into the hideous slip of a room, with the Hotel Rules and the Police Regulations pinned over the washstand, and narrow shy furniture that looked as if it were afraid that one fine night the hotel walls would clap together like butter-pats and squeeze it.

She crossed to the window and looked out over a court on to the back of another tall building with strangely crooked windows, hung with tattered washing, like the windows of a house in a comic picture.

"A very nice little room for Madame," said the waiter, and moving to the bed he slapped it and gave the mattress a pinch which did not seem to be merely professional. "Very clean, you see, Madame. Very comfortable, with electric light and running water."

She could hardly repress a cold shiver of horror. She said dully:

"No, I do not like this room at all. And besides it has not got a good table. I must have a good table in my room."

"A *table*, Madame!" said the waiter, and as he straightened up, his very feather duster seemed to be printed on his blue linen apron like a big exclamation mark of astonishment. "A table! But Madame desires a bed? Madame desires a bed as well as a table, *n'est-ce pas, Madame?*"

The Lost Battle

She did not reply to the fool. "Show me a large room!" she said. As he took some sliding, gliding steps to the door, she had the fancy that he was about to waltz down the passage in a frenzy of delighted amusement.

"Mais voilà une belle chambre!" said the waiter, stopping in front of another grey-painted door, and laying across the palm of his hand the bunch of jingling keys. He cocked his head on one side, selecting the right one. "But it's dear, you understand. It costs six francs a day, and without breakfast. You understand, Madame? Six francs." To make this perfectly clear he held up six keys arranged like a fan. At that moment she would have paid sixty just to be rid of that grinning ape, just to have the right to shut the door upon him.

But it really was a very charming room—big—square—with windows on two sides. A white wall-paper, pink carpet and arm-chair, with a dab of faded white lace on the back, and a dab on either arm—yellow waxed furniture, and a table-cover of blue cloth. Very nice—very nice indeed. She put her hands on the table. It was steady as a rock.

"Madame is pleased?" asked the waiter.

"Yes." She told him she would take the room, and he was to have her luggage sent immediately.

When he had gone, and the door really *was* shut, she behaved quite wildly for a minute or two, and ran about, flinging up her arms and crying "Oh, oh!" as though she had just been rescued from a shipwreck or a burning house.

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Between the charming net curtains, through one window she could see across a square to the railing of what looked like a park, full of yellowing trees. The other looked over a street of little cafés half-hidden under striped awnings, and enchanting little shops. One was a confectioner's shop with a big white shoe in the window, filled with silver chocolates, and one was a florist's. A woman knelt on the step; outside were flat yellow baskets of flowers. Then there was a tiny hat-shop filled with black hats and crepe veils. How tiny the people looked, as she peered down upon them—so squat and broad! They sauntered from side to side like little black crabs. Really, this room was almost perfect in this way—absolutely, scrupulously clean. She would be very happy there; this was exactly what she had imagined. . . . With flowers, with her books arranged, and one or two odd pieces of bright silk that she always travelled with, and her lovely embroidered shawl flung over the settee, and her writing things out on the table—really . . .

There came a bang at the door, followed by a little red-haired boy staggering under the weight of her suit-cases. He was very pale, with big splashes of freckles on his nose and under his eyes, and so out of breath that he could not even ask her where she wanted the luggage put, but stood, his head craned forward, his mouth open, to suck in the unaccustomed air. She overpaid him, and he went away. But with the generous coin she seemed to have given to him all her

The Lost Battle

excitement and her delight. The door shut upon it; it was free. The sound of it died away.

In the mirror she saw again that strange watchful creature who had been her companion on the journey, that woman with white cheeks and dark eyes and lips whose secret she shared, but whose air of stealthy desperation baffled and frightened her, and seemed somehow quite out of her control.

She said to herself, as she stroked her muff, "Keep calm!" But it was too late. She had no more power over herself. She stammered: "I must, you know. . . . I must have love. . . . I can't live without love, you know . . . it's not . . ." At the words that block of ice which had become her bosom melted into warm tears, and she felt these tears in great warm ripples flowing over her whole body. Yes, she wept as it were from head to foot. She bowed herself over her darling familiar muff and felt that she would dissolve away in tears. It was all over—all over. What was all over? Everything. The battle was lost.

(January, 1917.)

Love-Lies-Bleeding.

At half-past two the servant girl stumped along the narrow passage from the kitchen to the dining-room, thrust her head in at the door and shouted in her loud, impudent voice: "Well, I'm off, Mrs. Eichelbaum. I'll be here to-morrow, Mrs. Eichelbaum." Muffi waited until she heard the servant's steps crunch down the gravel

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path, heard the gate creak and slam, listened until those steps died away quite, and silence like a watchful spider began to spin its silent web over the little house. Everything changed. The white curtains bulged and blew out as though to the first breath of a mysterious breeze, blowing from nowhere; the dark furniture swelled with rich important life; all the plates on the side-board, the pictures and ornaments, gleamed as though they shone through water; even the lilies, the faded lilies flung all over the green wallpaper, solemnly uncurled again, and she could hear the clock, ticking away, trotting away, galloping away . . . a rider with a dark plume round his hat riding on a white horse down a lonely road in the moonlight.

Stealthy as a little cat Muffi crept into the kitchen, up the stairs into their bedroom and the children's room, down again and into the study, to make sure that nobody was there, and then she came back to the dining-room and folded herself upon the shabby sofa before the window, her feet tucked under her, her hands shut in her lap.

The window of the dining-room looked out on to a paddock covered with long grass and ragged bushes. In one corner lay a heap of bricks, in another a load of timber was tumbled. Round three sides of the paddock there reared up three new houses, white, unsubstantial, puffed up in the air like half-baked meringues. A fourth was being built; only the walls and criss-cross beams showed. Everything that afternoon was blurred with a thick sea mist, and somewhere in the

Love-Lies-Bleeding

paddock, out of sight, a man was playing the cornet. He must have been walking about while he played, for sometimes the notes sounded loud and harsh, full of despair and threatening anger, sometimes they came from far away, bubbles of melancholy sound floating on the swaying mist.

Ta-ta-ta
Tiddle-um tiddle-um
Ta tiddley-um tum ta.

There was nobody to be seen and nothing to be heard except that cornet and the tap of hammers in the hollow house.

"It's autumn," thought Muffi. Her lips trembled, tasting the mist and the cold air. "Yes, it's autumn."

Not that she felt sad. No, she merely responded, just as she held up her face to the sun and wrapped herself together against the rain. It was not Muffi's nature to rebel against anything.

Why should she? What good would it do? She accepted life with cowlike female stupidity, as Max put it.

"And you are like all women," he would sneer. "You love to make men believe that you are rarer beings, more delicately attuned than they. . . . Nothing surprises me," Max would squeak in a mincing voice, flirting his fat hand, "nothing alarms me, I knew that it was going to rain, I knew that we were going to miss the train, I knew that my children would catch cold. I have my celestial messengers. But any man old enough to shave himself knows that divine calm is simply

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your lack of imagination, and that no woman ever feels anything—once she is out of bed.”

The children loved their father when he began to talk like that. He would walk up and down the room, holding up his coat-tails for a skirt, laughing and jeering at women and at their imbecile ~~un~~believable vanity. . . . The children used to sit at the table and bang with their fists and clap their hands and jump up and down. “Ah, Papa! Ah, my Papa! My darling clever little Papa!” Rudi would cry; but Katerina, who was eleven years old and quite a woman, realised that Papa really meant Muffi when he tiptoed and squeaked, and therein lay her joy.

Muffi smiled too, and when Rudi, quite overcome, would fling himself upon her, crying breathlessly: “Isn’t it wonderful, my Papa?” she would answer: “Yes, he is wonderful.” What did it matter?

Ta-ta-ta
Tiddle-um tiddle-um
Ta tiddley-um tum ta

went the cornet. She had never heard it before. She hoped it was not going to be there every afternoon. Perhaps it was the sea mist that had brought it. What was the player like? He was an old man wearing a peaked cap and his grey beard was hung with a web of bright drops. She smiled; he stood before her, the cornet under his arm, wiping his face with a coloured handkerchief that smelt of tar. . . . Tell me, why do you play the cornet? . . . Now he was gone again, sitting

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perhaps behind the heap of timber, far away, and playing more forlornly than ever. . . .

She stirred and sighed and stretched herself.

"What am I going to do this afternoon?" thought Muffi. Every day she asked herself that question, and every day it ended in her doing just the same thing—nothing at all. In the winter she lay in front of the fire, staring at the bright dazzle; in summer she sat at the open window and watched the breeze skim through the long gleaming grass, and then those ragged bushes were covered with tiny cream flowers; and in autumn and winter she sat there too, only then the window was shut. Some days a sea mist covered everything, and other days the wild hooting south wind blew as if it meant to tear everything off the earth, tear everything up by the roots and send it spinning. She did not even think or dream. No, as she sat there, ever so faintly smiling, with something mocking in the way her eyelids lay upon her eyes, she looked like a person waiting for a train that she knew would not come, never would by any chance carry her away, did not even exist. . . .

During the afternoon the baker's boy came and left a loaf on the kitchen window sill. The round basket on his back always reminded her of a snail's shell. "Here comes the snail," she would say. Three times a week an awful butcher, a man so raw and red and willing to oblige that she always felt if he hadn't the pound and a half of steak she wanted he'd be quite willing to cut it off his own person and never notice the difference. . . . And very, very rarely, two shabby old nuns wheeling

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a perambulator knocked at the door and asked her if she had any scraps or bits of things for the orphan children at Lyall Bay. . . . No, she never had, but she liked very much seeing them at her door, smiling so gently, their hands tucked in their sleeves. They made her feel so small somehow, so like an orphan child herself. One of them always did the talking, and the other kept silent.

"You're not married, are you?" asked the talkative nun on one occasion.

"Oh, yes," said Muffi.

"Glory be!" cried the old nun, and seemed positively to wring her hidden hands in horror.

"You've no children?" she asked, her old mouth falling open.

"Yes, I've a little boy of seven."

"Mother of God!" cried the old nun, and that day they went away pushing the perambulator very slowly, as though it were heavy with the incredible news.

Any time after five o'clock the children came home from school. . . .

Five o'clock struck. Muffi got up from the sofa to put the kettle on for their tea. She was bending over the kitchen stove when someone tapped on the window. Rudi. Yes, there he was tapping on the window, smiling and nodding. Ah, the darling. He was home early. She flew to the back door and just had time to open it . . . to hold out her arms and in he tumbled.

"You're early. You darling. You're so beauti-

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fully early," she stammered, kissing and hugging him. How wet and cold his cheeks were; and his fingers, even his fringe was damp. For a moment he could not speak. He might have been a little boy picked out of the sea, so breathless and exhausted was he. At last he swallowed twice and gave a final gasping sigh.

"I'm simply sopping from this mist," he panted. "Feel my cap, Muffi. Drenched!"

"Drenched," said she, kneeling down to take off his reefer jacket.

"Oh, I'm still so out of breath," he cried, stamping and wriggling his way out of the sleeves. "I simply flew home."

"Let me jump you on the table and take off your boots, my precious."

"Oh, no!" He had got back his self-contained deliberate little voice. "I can take off my own boots, Muffi, I always do."

"Ah, no! Let me," she pleaded. "Just this once. Just for a treat."

At that he threw back his head and looked at her, his eyes dancing.

"Well, you have got funny ideas of a treat."

"Yes," said she. "I know I have. Awfully funny ideas. Now the other foot, old man."

When she had finished, he sat on the table edge and swung his leg, pouting and frowning, and showing off just a tiny bit. He knew, as he sat there, that he was the most loved little boy in the world, the most admired, the most cherished. And Muffi let him know it. They were alone together so seldom; they could not afford to

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pretend, to waste a moment. He seemed to realise that. He said: "Katerina will be home in a minute. I passed her on my way, dawdling along with that Lily Tar. I can't stand Lily Tar, Muffi. She's always got her arm round someone and she's always whispering."

"Don't bother about her," said Muffi, as much as to say: "If Lily Tar dares to get in your way I shall see that she is destroyed instantly." Lily Tar was gone. He looked down at his little red paws.

"My fingers are so stiff," he said. "I'll never be able to practise."

"Sit down on the hassock here before the fire and give them a good warm."

"It's very nice down here," he decided after a moment. "I love being down low and looking up at things—don't you? At people moving and the legs of chairs and tables and the shadows on the floor." His voice tailed off, dreamy and absorbed. She let him be. She thought: "He is getting back to himself after that horrible rowdy school." But a moment later the front door slammed and Katerina came into the kitchen.

"Hullo!" said she, very airy. "Why did you tear home so, Rudi? Lily and I could not help screaming at the way you were rushing along."

"I heard you," said Rudi. "I knew you meant me to hear, didn't you?" At that she opened her big velvety eyes at him and laughed.

"What a baby you are!"

"But you did, didn't you?" he protested.

"Of course not," she jeered. "We were laughing at something quite different."

Strange Visitor

"But you just said you were laughing at me, Katerina."

"Oh, only in a way," she drawled.

Rudi jumped up. "Oh, Katerina," he wailed, "why do you tell such awful stories?"

Muffi's back was turned, so Katerina made a hideous face at him and sat down at the table. All the while she was eating her tea Katerina could not help smiling her strange little cat smile. The lids fell over her eyes as though she were basking before some mysterious warm secret that she would never share with a baby boy. When she helped herself to jam, holding the jam spoon high up in the air and letting the jam fall in red blobs on her bread, Rudi hated her so much he gave a great shudder of horror and pushed back his chair. Again she opened those big pansy velvet eyes and again the wide surprised stare.

"What is the matter, now?" asked Katerina.

But that was too much for Rudi. He couldn't understand it, no, he couldn't. "Muffi, why does she do it? How can she?"

But Muffi gave barely a sign. "Don't tease him so, Katerina!" she said. She poured some warm water into a basin and gave Rudi a thin shave of soap. And as he washed his hands he turned to her. . . .

Strange Visitor.

It was neither dark nor light in the cabin. The ring of the port-hole shone very bright and cold, like the eye of some huge dead bird. In that eye

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you saw an immense stretch of grey, waving water—a vague sky above—and between, a few huge live birds flying so aimless and uncertain they didn't look like birds at all, but like bits of wave, torn off, or just shadows.

Shadows, too, birds of shadow, flew across the cabin ceiling—across its whiteness, iron girders, splashes of rust, big nails coated with paint, paint blisters. There was a strange gleam on the walls. A tiny day seemed to be breaking all on its own in the mirror above the washstand, and another tide rose and fell in the thick bottle.

It was cold. The damp air smelled of paint and rubber and sea-water. The only thing of life in the silent cabin was the little doll-like curtain hanging at the port-hole. In the quiet it lifted—lifted—fluttered—then blew out straight and stiff, tugging at the rings. And then gently, gently, it fell again; again it folded, drooped, only to begin puff-puffing out once more, stretching out stiff, with only a quiver, dancing a secret dance as it were, while those birds of silence chased over the ceiling. The minute day deepened very slowly in the mirror, and in the thick bottle rose and ebbed the heavy tide.

“ . . . But, my dear child, it's no earthly use simply to say that you've lost it. That won't help you. How can it? You must stir yourself, rouse yourself—begin looking for it. It must be somewhere. Things don't simply disappear, vanish into thin air. You know that as well as I do. Pull yourself together! Concentrate! Now, when did you last have it? When did you first

Strange Visitor

realise it was gone? When did you feel that terrific shock—that 'Good heavens! where on earth . . .'? Don't you know? You must remember that.

"And o-oh! don't mind my laughing, darling, but you look so tragic. I can't help saying it is so exactly like you, so just the sort of thing that would be bound to happen to you of all people. One might almost say that you've been working up to it, don't you know, all your life.

"Lost, stolen or strayed. We shall have to advertise. Three shillings a line for the first two lines, and something enormous a word afterwards. You don't think I'm cruel, do you, pet? Everything has its funny side, hasn't it? And if one can bring one's sense of humour to bear upon a thing, what *can* be better? Don't you agree? Of course, I'm a philosopher. I don't believe there's a single thing we aren't really better without. But I can't expect you to agree with that. Cheer up! We've only one life after all. That's cheap, I know—but you could not say a truer thing—not even if you were willing to spend millions on it.

"If I were you, I should put it all out of my mind—make a fresh start—behave as though it was not. Ah, I know that sounds hard to you now, girlie. (You don't mind my calling you 'girlie' and just patting your hand as I do? I enjoy it. And the tremor you can get on 'girlie'! Marvellous!) But Time heals all. Not with his scythe, dear. No, with his egg-timer. My facetious way of saying his hour-glass. Ha! Ha!

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Ha! . . . you hate me, I know. Well, I'm just going. But one day, if you are honest with yourself, you will remember, and you will say, Yes, she was right and I was wrong—she was wise and I was foolish."

The odious little creature, who had been sitting on the edge of the lower berth, drew on a pair of dirty white kid gloves, tucked her tail under her arm, gave a loud high cackle, and vanished.

The figure on the bunk gave no sign. She lay on her back, her arms stretched down by her sides, her feet just touching the wooden rim at the end of the berth, the sheet up to her chin. Very pale, frowning, she stared at the spot where the little monkey had been sitting, shut her eyes, opened them, looked again—nobody was there. And the night was over. It was too late to expect anybody else.

She shut her eyes again. A great loud pulse beat in her body. Or was it in the ship? In the ship. She had no body. She just had hands and feet and a head—nothing else at all. Of course, they were joined together by something, but not more than the stars of the Southern Cross were joined together. How otherwise could she feel so light, so light?

There is no Answer.

Certainly it was cold, very cold. When she opened her lips and drew in a breath she could taste the cold air on her tongue, like a piece of ice. But though she shivered so and held her

There is no Answer

muff tightly pressed against her to stop the strange, uneasy trembling in her stomach, she was glad of the cold. It made her feel, in those first strange moments, less strange and less alone; it allowed her to pretend in those first really rather terrifying moments that she was a tiny part of the life of the town—that she could, as it were, join in the game without all the other children stopping to stare and to point at the entirely new little girl. True, there had been two seconds when she was a forlorn little creature, conspicuous and self-conscious, stuffing her luggage ticket into her glove and wondering where to go to next; but then, from nowhere, she was pelted with that incredible snowball of cold air, and she started walking away from the station, quickly, quickly . . .

In all probability those simple people passing, so stout and red, those large, cheerful bundles with a friendly eye for her, imagined that she was some young wife and mother who had arrived home unexpectedly because she could not bear to be away another moment. And while she walked down the station hill quickly, quickly, she smiled—she saw herself mounting a flight of shallow waxed stairs, pulling an old-fashioned red velvet bell-cord, putting her finger to her lips when the ancient family servant (her old nurse, of course) would have cried the house about her, and rustling into the breakfast room where her husband sat drinking coffee and her little son stood in front of him with his hands behind his back, reciting something in French. But now

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her husband grew long ears and immense bony knuckles, and now she was Anna, kneeling on the floor and raising her veil the better to embrace and clasp her darling Serozha.

Which was all very well, but what a time and place to choose for this nonsensical dreaming! She had better find a café where she could have breakfast and devour the hotel list with her coffee. By now she was right 'in the town' and walking down a narrow street full of half-open shops. She bought a newspaper from an old hag squatting beside a kiosk, her skirt turned back over her knees, munching a mash of bread and soup, and was just going into a discreet 'suitable looking' café when she saw a lovely flower stall. The flower seller knelt on the pavement surrounded by a litter of flat yellow baskets. She took out and shook, and held up to the critical light bunch after bunch of round, bright flowers. Jonquils and anemones, roses and marigolds, plumes of mimosa, lilies-of-the-valley in a bed of wool, stocks of a strange pink, like the eyes of white rabbits, and purple and white violets that one longed not only to smell but to press against one's lips and almost to eat. Oh, how she loved flowers! What a passion she had for them and how much they meant to her! Yes, they meant almost everything. And while she watched the woman arrange her wares in tin cups and glasses and round china jars she was strangely conscious of the early morning life of this foreign town. She heard it, she felt it flowing about her as though she and the flowers stood together on an

There is no Answer

island in the middle of a quick flowing river—but the flowers were more real. And the crowning joy and wonder that she was perfectly free to look at them, to 'take them in' for just as long as she liked. . . . For the first time she drank a long heady draught of this new wine, freedom. There was no one at her elbow to say: "But my dear, this is not the moment to rave about flowers"—no one to tell her that hotel bedrooms were more important than marigolds, not a soul who simply by standing there could make her realise that she was in all probability in an abnormal, hysterical state through not having slept all night. So she drank the cup to the sweet dregs and bought an armful of mixed beauties and carried them into the café with her.

They were heaped on the table beside her and their scent mingled with the delicious smell of the coffee, and the cigarette she smoked was too sweet, too exciting to bear. She almost felt that the flowers, in some fairy fashion, changed into wreaths and garlands and lay on her lifting bosom and pressed on her brow until she bent her head, gazing with half-shut eyes at the white ring of the cup and the white ring of the saucer, the round, white shape of the pot and jug and the four crossed pieces of sugar on the table, at the cigarettes, spilled out of a yellow wrapper, and her little hands, folded together, so mysteriously, as though they held a butterfly.

"Daisy! Daisy! giv me your onze heures, do!"

sang someone. She looked up. A young man

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in a light tweed cap stood against the counter, playing with a black kitten. Except for the flat-footed old waiter who shuffled among the tables at the far end like a forlorn aged crab, she and the young man were quite alone in the café. The kitten was very tiny; it could not even walk yet. It knew all about what to do with the front half of itself, but its two little black legs were the trouble. They wanted to jump along, or to bound along in a kind of minute, absurd gallop. How very confusing it was! But the young man leaning over the counter and singing 'Daisy! Daisy!' hadn't a grain of pity in him. He threw the kitten over, rolled it into a ball, tickled it, held it up by its front paws and made it dance, let it almost escape, and then pounced on it again and made it bite its own tail.

"Giv me your onze heures, do!"

he sang, in his swaggering, over-emphasised fashion. She decided he knew perfectly well that someone was watching and listening. . . . But how wonderfully at home he looks, she thought. How lazily, how lightly he leans and stretches, as though it were impossible for anything to upset his easy balance, and as though if he chose, he could play with life just as he played with the kitten, tumble it over, tickle it, stand it on its hind legs and make it dance for him.

Quite suddenly the young man threw the kitten away, caught up his glass of dark purplish coffee, and facing her he began to sip and stare. Cool, cool beyond measure, he took his time,

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narrowed his eyes, crossed his feet and had a good, good look at her. Well—why not? She took another cigarette, tapped it on the table, and lighted it, but for all her manner a malignant little voice in her brain warned her: "Keep calm!" She felt his eyes travel over her big bunch of flowers, over her muff and gloves and handbag, until they rested finally upon her, where she sat with her purple veil thrown back and her travelling cape with the fur collar dropping off her shoulders. Her heart beat up hot and hard; she pressed her knees together like a frightened girl and the malignant little voice mocked: "If you were perfectly certain that he was admiring you, you would not mind at all. *On the contrary . . .*"

Then just as suddenly as he had turned he wheeled round again and stood with his back toward her. Again he began to sing:

"Daisy! Daisy! giv me your onze heures, do!"

Was it just her fancy or did she really detect in his shoulders and in his twanging voice, real, laughing contempt . . .? Wasn't he singing again just to show her that he had looked and seen quite enough, thank you? But what did it matter—an insolent, underbred boy! What on earth had she to do with him! She tapped with her spoon for the waiter, paid, gathered up her flowers, her muff, her bag, and keeping her eyes fixed on the café door as though she was not perfectly certain whether it was the door or not, she walked out into the street.

It had positively grown colder while she was

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in that café. The sun was hidden for a moment behind a wing of cloud and the clatter and rattle of the morning traffic pouring over the cobbles sounded so loud and harsh that it bruised her nerves. How tired she was—very tired! She must find a room and escape from this street immediately. It was ridiculous to walk about like this after a racking night in the train. She longed to take off her tired clothes, and to lie in a hot bath smelling of carnation crystals. At the thought of gliding between incredibly smooth gleaming sheets she gave a nervous shiver of delight.

"But what has happened to your blissful happiness of half an hour ago?" mocked the tiny voice. No, no, she wouldn't listen! . . .

If only she could get rid of this absurd bunch of flowers. They made her look ridiculous, feel ridiculous—feel like a gushing schoolgirl returned from a school picnic. What would the hotel people think when she arrived without any luggage but 'simply' carrying flowers?

"Very touching! Dear me—really!" she stormed; "you might have waited!" If only she could find some place to throw them away!

"Do not throw us away!" pleaded the flowers. No, she wouldn't be so cruel. But how she hated them! And she hid them under her cape, like a lady in a melodrama trying to hide a baby, she thought, as she pushed through the swing doors of an hotel.

Late afternoon. She woke, she opened her

eyes but did not move—did not move a finger. She lay so still that she tricked her body into believing that she was still asleep. All warm and relaxed it lay, breathing deeply and beating with slow, soft pulses. . . .

The Pessimist.

After luncheon the weather was so enchanting (enchancing was the word that week-end; it had been brought from town by Moyra Moore and everybody was using it), the day was so perfectly enchanting that they wandered into the garden and coffee was served under the—yes, actually—spreading chestnut tree. The three Pokes and the baby Pekums who had just had their dinner of underdone steak mixed with a morsel of heart and the merest dash of liver, their favourite combination, started an intricate game of chase in and out of people's ankles which was slightly bewildering. But nobody really minded except the Cabinet Minister who was terrified of being bitten; he shook his finger at the little loves and said, "Not so fast, my young friends!" in a would-be-playful tone that didn't deceive a soul—least of all the Pokes.

The hostess stood at the table pouring out the coffee. In her yellow muslin dress with a green silk hat, green stockings and black satin shoes, she felt wonderfully like a character out of the Russian ballet. She lifted the quaint pots with strange little angular gestures, and when she had filled a

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thimble she held it up high in the air and cried "Coffee! Coffee!" as though she were summoning her little negro page.

Moyra Moore, kneeling on the grass before a tulip,—she always knelt before the flowers she admired . . . could one do less?—murmured, "It's quite as good as a Matisse. I mean the line is quite as strange. Real flowers are often so dreadfully cosy looking—don't you think?" And the young gentleman of the moment, who was trying hard to live up to this, heard himself say—but could not stop himself—"Roses are very nice, aren't they?"

On the garden bench under the billowy tree sat a little lady with a fan and such a large comb in her hair that every time you looked at her it gave you a fresh small shock. Was it so big as that last time? . . . Beside her sat a fair woman smiling the trembling perpetual smile that hovers on the lips of young mothers; as a matter of fact she had just published her first novel. "It was just out," as she told everybody, smiling into the distance as if she saw it being wheeled away in a white perambulator. And at the end of the bench a very dark young man stretched his legs and blew smoke rings. He was writing a play, "Freud Among the Ruins", which was going to be accepted by the Theatre Society as soon as it was finished, though they had given him no definite date when it was to be produced, as yet . . . A very young poet hovered under the tree looking up through the branches. The hostess did wish he would sit down. One could not really look as vague as that. And besides it

The Pessimist

would give the Cabinet Minister such a wrong impression.

"Coffee, Spencer! Your coffee is here," she cried playfully.

What was there about the couple in cane chairs on the other side of the table that kept them just a little out of the picture? He was tall, lean, with a long, clean-shaven face that looked dreamy . . . And she was one of those women . . . one of those women who still exist in spite of everything. True, they are rare, but were they ever anything but rare? Where do they come from and what happens to them? Have they ever been young girls? Will they ever become old ladies? One cannot imagine them except between thirty and forty. They are exquisite, elusive, flawless-looking, with slow movements, perfect hands and perfect hair. When they travel, their luggage is a paper of parma violets or a few long-stemmed yellow roses, while in the background hovers the ideal maid with the russia leather dressing-case and the fur-coat lined with oyster brocade. Their jewel is pearls—pearl ear-rings—a string of pearls—pearls on their fingers. And the curious thing is that whatever they say—and they seldom say anything very remarkable—"I always sleep in my pearls," or "I am afraid I know very little about modern music," or "I always think it's so clever to be able to write,"—one feels charmed and gratified—and even a little carried away. Why?

"Dearest!" said Moyra Moore, coming over to the hostess and stroking her cheek with a poor

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pale tulip. "Do tell me about the spreading chestnut tree! Was it before my time or after?"

"Oh, you wicked child!" said the hostess, looking regretfully at the tulip.

But the poet piped: "It was a poem by Longfellow!"

At that the dark young man sat up suddenly and stopped making rings. "Goldsmith, please!" he said shortly, as though Goldsmith was a friend of his, and that really was a bit too steep.

The young poet looked as if he were going to cry. "Oh, come now," said the Cabinet Minister pleasantly. The hostess sighed with relief that they had begun to talk about something simple enough for him to join in. "Surely it was Longfellow. It was certainly Longfellow in my young days." And because he was a Cabinet Minister, they all smiled knowingly as though he had said something quite amusing—all but the dark young man, who looked terrible.

"Under the spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands,"

said the lady with the fan. "I've always wanted to ask, but I've never dared to. Was he the same smith as that dreadful harmonious one that one used to have to practise on the cold piano in the early mornings?"

"But that's by Handel," murmured the lady novelist.

The dark young man spoke again. "Haydn, please," he said.

The Pessimist

At that the Cabinet Minister looked quite distressed. What a bother it was! thought the hostess. They were really worrying him.

"I am afraid," he said, still quite pleasantly, "you're not quite right in your facts. I fancy—in fact I feel quite certain on this point—the name was Handel."

But this time the dark young man refused to be subdued.

"I thought that Samuel Butler had proved that Handel didn't exist."

"Samuel Butler!" cried the Cabinet Minister. But he was obviously staggered. "Then how on earth—how on earth does he account for the Messiah?"

"The Messiah!" cooed Moyra Moore, and waved the tulip like a wandering angel.

But that was too much for the hostess. She ran to the rescue of the Cabinet Minister. "You must come, you must come and see my asparagus," she pleaded. "It's so wonderful this year."

The Cabinet Minister was delighted, and away they wandered.

The little lady with the fan tinkled with laughter.

"But—do look at his trousers!" she cried. "They are just like crackers. Chinese crackers after a funeral. If only the ends were cut into fringes!"

The couple in the cane chairs stirred too. "Do you care . . . ?" he murmured.

"I should like to," murmured she, and

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they too wandered across the brilliant green lawn.

"I wonder what they are saying about me," said the tall man gloomily.

The pearl lady opened her grey sunshade and smiled faintly. "It's quite hot," she said.

At the words he put his hand to his head with a look of alarm. "Hot! My God, so it is! Do you mind waiting here for a moment while I get my hat?" And he said something about the heat being fatal as he strode away.

She bent towards a huge creamy magnolia flower and smelled it with that distraught expression with which women smell a cake of soap or a sachet while waiting at the chemist's shop.

Back he came really adorned with a wide, silver-grey hat.

"I'm afraid I don't quite know," said the hostess vaguely. "He used to ride with my brothers—years ago. I remember he once had an extraordinary accident—well, hardly an accident. But they were all dismounting and his foot got jammed in the stirrup. He'd no idea it was caught, and he fell off—exactly like the White Knight—and there he lay with one foot in the air . . ."

"But how too odd for words!" said the lady with the fan.

"And he doesn't look the type those things happen to," mused the lady novelist.

"Did you notice at lunch he upset his wine?" said an animated young thing who seemed to

Last Words to Youth

belong to nobody and to thirst to be adopted by somebody—anybody.

"No! did he? How too tiresome!" wailed the hostess. "My lovely cloth!"

"Yes, and he said," cried the young thing, revelling in her success, "I dreamed last night I was going to do this . . ."

At that moment there came a sharp pit-pat on the crown of his hat.

"Good Lord!" he said. "A drop of rain. How extraordinary!" But when he took off his hat to see, he laughed bitterly. "That's done it," he said. "That's finished it, completely."

And a tiny bird that had been perched on the tree just above their heads flew away and its wings sounded like breathless laughing.

But the weather was still enchanting!

Last Words to Youth.

There was a woman on the station platform—a tall scrag of a woman, wearing a little round hat with a brown feather, that dropped in a draggled fringe over her eyes. She was dressed in a brown jacket, and a narrow brown skirt, and in her bare hand she clutched a broken-down-looking leather bag—the outside pockets bulging with—what looked like—old torn-up envelopes. Round her neck some indescribable dead animal bit its own tail: its fur standing up wet and sticky like the fur of a drowned kitten. Brown buttoned boots showed under the brown skirt and an end of white

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petticoat dabbled with mud. The toss and tumble, the hurrying threading rush of movement left her high and dry. She stood as though she were part of the furniture of the station and had been there for years—an old automatic machine that nobody dreamed of slipping a coin into—or even troubled to glance at to find out what once it contained—whether a drop of white rose perfume or a cachet or *deux cigarettes à la reine d'Egypte*. Even the porters seemed to accept her right to stand there, and all the people clambering out of the train, the pale women bunched up in furs, stout unshaven men buttoned up in overcoats, simply did not see her, but met their friends and lovers and kissed and chattered and squabbled under her very nose.

“There is something revolting about her, something humble and resigned—almost idiotic,” thought Marion, and she sat down on her hat-box, waiting for that mysterious porter, who had appeared and disappeared to find a truck, to trundle her things into the cloak-room. “I wish he would come—I’m cold—I really am quite dangerously cold.” She clutched her muff tight against her, to stop the strange trembling shivers that rippled over her whole body; but now she could not control two little muscles in her cheek bones that moved up and down like tiny pistons. “No, I never sleep in trains,” she said to nobody at all, “and, my dear, you have no conception of the heat in that carriage—the windows simply ran. There was a strange pale female opposite to me, all wrapped up in black shawls which she

Last Words to Youth

called her *chiffons*. In the middle of the night when everybody was asleep she rooted among her baggage, spread a white handkerchief on her lap, produced what I tried to believe was the end of a cold rabbit, tearing at the little legs, cracking up the bones and swaying about in the swinging half-dark as she munched—like the portrait of a mad baby-farmer by that Belgian—what is his name? Wierz . . . Yes, it was a very sinister, blackish little meal,” said Marion, and she smiled, thinking with half-affected dismay, “Heavens! I seem to be haunted by mad women—that woman last night and now this mad one this morning. A mad woman at night is a sailor’s delight—a mad woman in the morning is a sailor’s warning,” and she looked up to see the draggled bird moving towards her. Yes, she certainly was very ominous indeed . . . Heavens! What was she wearing? How absurd! How preposterous! Pinned to her jacket a knot of faded ribbon set off a large heart-shaped ticket inscribed . . . “The representative of the Society for the Protection of Young Girls.”

Life is not gay.

. . . But at last she was conscious that a choice had to be made, that before dawn, these shadows would appear less real, making way for something quite different. There was no hesitation now. She simply knew that she wanted him near her, that he was to her the meaning of love and of

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others—that without him all the world was as a little ball rolling over a dark sky.

Dawn broke, long in coming. She lay in the bed on her back, one arm behind her head, a hand on the counterpane—the window became blue, then suffused with gold light, but when she looked at her watch she was horrified to find that it was only half-past five o'clock. Hours had to be got through somehow—hours and hours—and you must remember that time was not the sort of thing you could count on at the last to be faithful or to be just. Now it behaved as it liked—it had infinite capacities for lengthening out, for hanging on like a white ribbon of road under your two tired feet—oh, to have done with it! To run like a little child over the long white place, to be there and in his arms!

She went over to the mirror, took off her cap, shook her hair—and once, adorably seeing his eyes watch her, she glanced over her shoulder and smiled—laughingly she powdered her face, rouged her lips, and traced with the tip of her finger her eyebrows. This was not Kezia, this being with . . .

“An author's vanity is vindictive, implacable, incapable of forgiveness; and his sister was the first and only person who had laid bare and disturbed that uneasy feeling, which is like a big box of crockery, easy to unpack but impossible to pack up again as it was before.”
(Tchegov: *Excellent People*.)

The Scholarship

A Version from Heine.

Countess Julia rowed over the Rhine
In a light boat by clear moonshine.
The waiting maid rowed, the Countess said:
"Do you not see the seven young dead
That behind us follow
In the waters shallow?
(*And the dead swim so sadly!*)

"They were warriors young and gay
And on my bosom they softly lay
And swore to be true. To plight our troth,
That they should never be false to their oath,
I had them bound
Straightway and drowned."
(*And the dead swim so sadly!*)

The waiting-maid rowed, but loud laughed she;
It rang through the night so dreadfully:
Till at the side the corpses dip
And dive and waggle a finger-tip;
As though swearing, they bow
With ice-glistening brow.
(*And the dead swim so sadly!*)

The Scholarship.

He was just in time. They were pulling down the blind in the Post Office when he burst in, pushing his way through the swing-doors with a kind of extravagant breast-stroke, and: "I can still send a telegram, can't I?" he cried to snappy little Miss Smythe, who rapped out: "If it's very important you may. *Not otherwise!*"

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"Oh, it is important, frightfully!" said he, giving her such a radiant unexpected beam that it shook two faded old banners into her cheeks. But he did not notice. He wrote in his beautiful flowing hand which even in that blissful moment he couldn't help admiring: *Got it arrive by morning boat to-morrow cheers*, and pushed it under the netting.

"It will be off to-night, won't it?" he asked, counting out a whole handful of pennies.

"Yes, I'll send it now," said she, and her dry little pencil hopped over the form. "Is the last word cheese?"

"Oh, no!" Again that beam lighting up the dingy little woman; even her Kruger-sovereign brooch seemed to glow with it. "It's cheers,—three cheers, you know. Musical cheers—no, that's wrong."

He was out again and swinging along the street (about two foot up in the air), swinging along the street that he'd never seen before. Glorious place! Such happy, splendid people hurrying home, their faces and hands a deep pink colour in the sunset light. Native women, big, dark and bright like dahlias, lolling on the benches outside the Grand Hotel. The carts and waggons, even the immense two-horse cabs went spanking by as though every horse's head was turned towards home. And then—the shops—fruit shops, a flare of gold—fish shops, a blaze of silver! As for the smell coming off the flower jars that the florist was spraying before he carried them inside for the night—it really knocked you over! That

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hand, too, hovering in the jeweller's window—taking out the little boxes and trays. Just a hand—so mysterious, so beautiful! To whom could it belong? And then a rolling navvy bumped into him and said: "Sorry, my lad!"

"My lad!" He wanted to fling his arms round the chap for it.

Although there was everything to be done he couldn't go home yet. He must walk this off a bit, he must climb a hill. Well, that wasn't difficult. The whole place was nothing but hills.

So he chose the steepest, and up and up he went, getting warm, then getting his second wind and simply floating on it to the very top—to a white painted rail against which he leaned and looked over.

For the first time, yes, positively for the first time, he saw the town below him—the red-roofed houses set in plummy, waving gardens, the absurd little city-quarter, "built in American style", the wharves, the tarred wharf-sheds, and behind these black masses two cranes, that looked somehow, from this distance, like two gigantic pairs of scissors, stuck on end. And then the deep, brimming harbour, shaped like a crater, in a curving brim of hills, just broken in the jagged place to let the big ships through.

For a moment, while he looked, it lay all bathed in brightness—so clear—he could have counted the camellias on the trees—and then, without warning, it was dark, quite dark, and lights began to appear, flowering in the soft hollows like sea-anemones.

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His eyelids smarted. His throat ached; he could have wept. He could have flung out his arms, and cried: "Oh, my darling, darling little town!" And all because he was going to leave it in a week's time—because he was off to Europe and God knows—if he'd ever see it again!

But instead of the fling he took a deep breath and in that breath he discovered how hungry he was. He was starving—quite faint with it. Marching down the hill his knees shook like an old woman's.

Down and down he went. There was nobody about now because it was supper-time. But the lighted houses in their plummy gardens were full of life; they could not hold so much. It broke from them, in voices and laughter, and scattered over the flowers and trees.

"Children! Children! come in at once!" called a woman. And "Oh, Mother!" answered the children.

Ah, how well he understood what they were feeling, poor little beggars! It was no time at all since he and Isobel had answered just like that.

The garden gate was clammy and cold. As he walked up the path a bough of syringa brushed his face, wetting his cheeks and lips. And he smiled, with a strange little shiver of delight; he felt that the plant was playing with him. . . .

Two oblong pieces of light lay on the grass below the french windows of the dining-room. He leapt on to the verandah and looked in. There he saw his brother-in-law, Kenneth, sitting at the

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table eating, with a book propped up against a glass jug.

"Hullo—old boy!" said Henry.

"Hullo!" said Kenneth, and he stared at Henry in the solemn absurd way that Henry loved. "You're late. Had supper?"

"Good God—no!" Henry came in and began wiping the dew and the pollen off his cheeks.

"Been crying?" asked Kenneth. "Big boy hit you?"

"Yes," said Henry.

"Lamb?" Kenneth's glance wandered over the table. Finally he took a water biscuit, broke it in half, put one half in his book for a marker and began to carve. And Henry stood beside him, looking at the glorified table.

It was an immense relief to have his hand on Kenneth's shoulder. It rested him. But what was there so lovable about that little tuft of hair that always stood up and wouldn't lie down on the top of Kenneth's head? It was such a part of his personality. Whatever he said—there it stood—waving away. Henry gave the shoulder a hard squeeze. "I can imagine Isobel marrying him for that," he thought.

"Stir the mint sauce well," said Kenneth. "All what Maisie calls 'the nice grittay part' is at the bottom." Henry sat down, stirred and stirred and pushed the mint sauce away. He leaned back in his chair and tried not to smile, tried to carry it off, frowned at his plate and then said: "Oh, I heard this afternoon I've got that Scholarship." He couldn't resist it; he had to look up at

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Kenneth who didn't give a sign, but rubbed the side of his nose in a way he had.

"Well," he said finally, "I knew you would. It was inevitable."

Henry gulped.

"Have a drink!" Kenneth pushed the glass jug across. "Don't swallow the cherries. The stones disembody, settle in the appendix, fertilize and send out shoots which have, sooner or later, to be snipped off. When do you sail?"

"A week from to-morrow."

Kenneth was silent. Then he opened his book and ate the book-marker.

"This is all about whales," he explained, blowing off the crumbs.

"It's extraordinarily unpleasant. I shouldn't advise anyone to read it. There's a description of sharks, too,—how when they are attacked—in the middle of the fight—they switch round and eat their own entrails—Sickening! . . . I suppose you wired Isobel."

"Yes, I'm going over to her by the morning boat. You know I promised, if this came off, that we'd spend our last week together."

"But what about packing—or aren't you going to take anything? Just a change of socks and a rook rifle?"

"I'm going to do all that to-night," said Henry. And then he smiled a blissful, childish smile, "I couldn't *sleep*, you know," and reached over for the salad.

"Look out for the cucumber," said Kenneth. "It sticks to the side of the vessel by some curious

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process—of suction, I believe. Well—I'm coming across to the Bay to-morrow afternoon. It's Saturday—you remember—or *don't* remember. We'll have the week-end together."

"That will be frightfully——" began Henry.

"Only I wish to God," Kenneth went on, "that I wasn't reading this book. I'll never be able to bathe again. The sea is simply teeming with horrors." He got up and filled his pipe. "Don't hurry. I'm going to smoke on the verandah."

But Henry couldn't be left alone. Besides, he wasn't hungry after all. He chose a big orange and followed after.

They walked into the warm velvet dark and into another world. Kenneth stood with his hands in his pockets looking over the garden—at all those shapes and shadows built up in the air. As he stared they seemed to move gently, flowing together under a rolling wave.

"Those gardens under the sea," he murmured, "must be the very devil!"

Henry sat on the verandah edge, eating his orange and looking at the clematis flowers. Wide open—dazzling they lay as if waiting in rapture for the moon. It was strange how frightfully they added to his excitement. He began to quiver all over. He thought, absurdly, "The top of my head feels just like one of those flowers," and a hundred miles away Kenneth murmured:

"Well, I'm glad it's you who are going and not me. I've no desire at all to rush into this affair they call Life. No, my job is to hide in a

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doorway, or squeeze under a porch until it is all over—only issuing forth—if I must issue forth—with Isobel for my Supreme Umbrella or Maisie for my small, coming-on, emergency umbrella—or ‘sunnyshade’ as she calls it. That’s the reason why I’m in favour of having large numbers of children—that they may be a kind of tent to me in my old age. . . .”

Henry went off to his packing. He got into his pyjamas just for the sake of coolness, for of course he wasn’t going to bed.

But by one o’clock everything was done and his feet were cold, so he just sat up in bed and decided to smoke until it was time to get up. After one cigarette he lay down on his side, curled up, one hand under his cheek, thinking. He felt himself smiling down to his very toes. Yes, every little toe, now that it was warm, had a basking smile on it. And this was so ridiculous that he began to laugh, cuddling down, burying his face in the pillow. And away the little boat floated. . . .

1918

January. "Better be imprudent moveables than prudent fixtures." (Keats to Fanny Brawne.)

A woman who is *un peu âgée* and has a youngish man in France shows very plain her jealousy and her desire to keep his attention from wandering. Even if he wants to sleep she takes his arm.

I never feel so comfortable or at ease as when I am holding a pencil. *Note that*, and if you have an embarrassing moment . . .

January 12. 'Charming!' thought Frances, smiling, as she pushed her way through the glass doors into the hairdresser's shop. What she meant by 'charming' was her little hand in a white kid glove with thick black stitching, pressed flat on the pane of the swing-door a moment. . . . Madame behind the counter, smiled back at her, and 'charming, charming' re-echoed in her smile and in her quick brilliant glance which flew over Frances from top to toe.

"Georges is quite ready," she cried. "If you will sit down a moment, I will call him," and while she spoke her smile widened and deepened, until even her black satin dress, her rings, her locket, her jewelled combs seemed to catch a

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ripple and to flash with it. Even the bottles and jars and bright mirrors of the hairdresser's shop gave it back again.

I shall certainly be able to write in a day or two if this goes on. I am not so wretched to-night.

February 7. How immensely easier it is to attack an insect that is running away from you than one that is running towards you. The scuttling tribe! Spiders as big as half-crowns, with long gooseberry hairs!

"Even though, as I now fear, to others it may be only an obscurity shed over things transparently clear." This was a passage from the draft of an essay on J. D. Fergusson's pictures, which was subsequently published under the title "*The Daughter of Necessity*", in *The Evolution of an Intellectual*. When I picked up our common notebook on the following day, to make a fair copy of the draft, I found *fear* and *clear* underlined, and the following lines below:—

Even though, as now I fear,
It may to others make obscure
Things that aforetime have been clear—
Transparent.

The passage was deleted.

An Idea.

Are you really, only happy when I am not there? Can you conceive of yourself buying

crimson roses and smiling at the flower woman if I were within 50 miles of you? Isn't it true that then, even if you are a prisoner—your time is your own . . . even if you are lonely, you are not being 'driven distracted'—Do you remember when you put your handkerchief to your lips and turned away from me—In that instant you were utterly, utterly apart from me—and I have never felt quite the same since. Also—there was the evening when you asked me if I still believed in the Heron¹—isn't it perhaps true that if I were 'flourishing' you would flourish—ever so much more easily and abundantly without the strain and wear of my presence. And we should send each other divine letters and divine 'work'—and you would quite forget that I was 29 and brown-eyed. People would ask—is she fair or dark? and you would say in a kind of daze—'Oh, I think her hair's pale yellow.' Well—well, it's not quite a perfect scheme. For I should have to hack off *my* parent *stem* such a branch—oh, such a branch that spreads over you and delights to shade you and to see you in dappled light and to refresh you and carry you a sweet (though quite unrecognised) perfume.

But it is *not* the same for you—you are always pale, exhausted, in an anguish of *set* anxiety, as soon as I am near. Now, I feel in your letters, this is going, and you are breathing again. How sad it is! Yes, I've a shrewd suspicion . . .

¹ The Heron Farm was the name of the house to which we dreamed of retiring after the war. Heron, or Herron, was a family name in the Beauchamp family.

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Of course M. L. will keep us one remove from each other; she'll be a 'help' that way. Did you realise that, when you were so anxious to keep her? For of course, as you know, I'd have chucked her finally after the Gwynne night if it hadn't been for your eagerness.

(May 22. Looe.)

The Quarrel.

So he sat and smoked his cigarette, looking at the empty fireplace, the frill of paper inside the grate, and the irons, inside too, heaped in a bundle.

"Put a match to them and get a blaze if you can, but that's all the fire you'll get in my house." Very cheering. Very hospitable.

But when the cigarette was three parts smoked, he thought miserably, "That's just about what I feel like. That's a complete picture of myself at this moment. It couldn't be truer."

She sat at the table, her hands just touching the long paper of mixed flowers that the landlady had given her to take home. They *were* mixed—Canterbury bells, sweet Williams like velvet pin-cushions, irises, silly flaring poppies, snapdragons; and some roses that smelt sweetly lay half spoiled with green-fly. She was not going to take them home. She had no vases to fit them, and besides she didn't want them. No, she would leave them in the rack of the railway carriage. If only some officious fool wouldn't run after. "Excuse me, Madam, you've left your flowers. . . ."

The Quarrel

In a few hours the ugly room which did not belong to them or to anybody, would be emptied of them for ever, and to-morrow morning or this evening perhaps the card labelled APARTMENTS would be stuck in the window. After they had gone, the landlady and her grandson would come in and sneak and pry about, looking for pickings. Had they left anything? Nothing but half a bottle of thoroughly bad ink and—yes, that bowl of dog daisies and sorrel on the mantelpiece. She'd throw away that wild trash—she'd chuck the daisies into the dustbin and then empty the tea-leaves on to them while they were yet alive. And she'd say: "She was as nice and pleasant spoke a young woman as you could wish to find, but he was a cool, fish-blooded young man and terrible hard to please sometimes, I reckon. Oh, *yes* . . ." And then she'd worry whether she couldn't have charged them a bit more for something they'd never had—and then they'd be forgotten.

He threw the cigarette end on to the hearth and slowly turned towards her but didn't look, saying in a cool unnatural voice, "Well, aren't you coming out?" for it had been agreed between them before this last quarrel that when the packing was over they would sit on the beach for half an hour and then come back to tea and wait for the cab that was to take them to the station.

That voice! How she hated it! And how it insulted her! How dare he speak to her like that! And the worst of it was it was so put on—so affected. He had a way—after they'd been

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quarrelling, or even in the middle of a quarrel—of speaking down to her as much as to say: “Of course you haven’t understood a word of what’s happened, but this sort of thing—‘Shall we have tea?’—‘Shall we go out?’—you can understand and you can reply to.”

She sat up and drew in her chin, making her throat very free and soft. She glanced with quick eyes and darted the words at him: “I’m certainly not going.”

But he saw none of this. Very listless and tired, he rolled out of the chair and pulled on his hat. “Oh, very well, please yourself!”

But she didn’t want to stay in that ugly room looking at those hideous flowers. The landlady would come in, too, and want to talk, and think it funny that she hadn’t gone with him. And she hated waiting by herself in this strange village, and she didn’t want him to be down there on the stony beach all alone—a little speck among all the others—unconscious of her, forgetting her. She didn’t trust him. He might do something idiotic. He might forget all about the time; he might hire a boat; say he rowed while the tea grew cold and the cab waited and she stood at the window in an anguish of exasperation—dying of it simply. . . . He was at the door.

“Yes, I *will* come, after all.”

Was he smiling? Had he known that she would “come round”? He gave no sign at all. Staring at the floor in the same listless, tired way:

“I’ll wait here while you put on your hat.”

“I’ve got it on,” said she.

The Quarrel

And they passed out of the ugly room into the hideous hall. There the landlady caught them; she had the door of the kitchen open on purpose. Out she bounced.

"Oh, Mrs. Tressle, I was wondering whether you care to take back a lobster. My cousin the fishmonger has just brought it across to be boiled and all . . ." She was back in the kitchen and out again with the strange red thing on a white dish—offering it to Miriam.

Instead of helping her to get rid of this fool of a woman, instead of even doing his share, he sauntered out of the house and stood at the gate with his hands in his pockets, looking down the road, leaving it as usual all to her. This she realized *beyond words* while she was pleasant and gay and grateful to the landlady: "It's awfully kind of you, Mrs. Trefoye, but my husband . . ."

"Don't care for them," said the landlady, smiling her knowing smile, which Miriam pretended not to see.

"They don't agree with him," she said regretfully, making a little moue of regret at the loathsome red body in the dish. "I wish they did. It *does* look a beauty!"

"Ah well, there's likes and dislikes," said the landlady, and Miriam went out to join him.

It was hot and fine. The air quivered. You would have fancied the whole round world lay open like a flower to the sun, and behind everything, underneath all the little noises, there was a stillness, a profound calm, a surrender, so blissful

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that even human beings were moved by it and walked along easy and confident. The cats lay asleep on the window sills, a row of seagulls perched on the roof tiles. Marble birds.

Nobody saw the queer ugly child dragging between them, clutching a hand of each as they walked side by side down the road. Obstinate, ugly and heavy, their only child, the child of their love. The only thing that held them together and kept them alive to each other.

He knew it. He felt it pulling. But just for the moment he did not care. As always happened after their quarrelling, folded in upon himself, sealed up, he died for the time being, like a sea anemone which has been prodded with a stone. He hadn't even got to the stage where the stone is rejected. No, there it lay—and he covered it and was still.

She, on the contrary, after the quarrels always felt so strong, so dreadfully full of life. She wanted to snatch the ugly brat up, to shake it and to cry: "See what you've made me bear. It's yours. It's all your fault! I never quarrelled with anybody before I met you. People used to say that I simply radiated happiness and well-being. And it was true, it was true! I was made to be happy and to make other people happy, and now you're killing me—killing me. You won't let me be myself even for a single moment. No, all you really want to do, your only real desire in life, is to drag me down—to make me somehow or other as wretched as yourself—to force me to

The Quarrel

crawl to the office with you every day and endure the torture and crawl back again. . . ."

(June 9.)

October. It is remarkable how much there is of the ordinary man in J. For instance, finding no towels in his room to-night, his indignation, sense of injury, desire so to shut his door that it would bring the house down—his fury in fact at having to look for the blasted things—all was just precisely what one would have expected of Father. . . . It makes me think again of the separation of the *Artist* and the *Man*.

It's like his *Why is lunch late?* as though I had but to wave my hand and the banquet descended. But doesn't that prove how happy he would have been with a real *WIFE*!

"'Tis thus:

Who tells me true, though in his tale lay death,
I hear him as he flattered."

"If I were to follow all your instructions and advice, I don't think I should have any pleasure in life at all."

Why do people always put on such airs when they are saying Goodbye? They seem so exquisitely glad to be staying. Are they? Or is it envy?

This is J.'s fountain pen and I don't think much of it. It's all on one side!

The trees will toss their little leaves
To mourn the loss of the new goldfinch.

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"The insolence of wealth is a wretched thing, but the conceit of parts has some foundation."
(Dr. Johnson.)

"A temporary poem always entertains us."

Dr. Johnson: "So does the account of the criminals hanged yesterday entertain us."

Criticism.

"Nobody has the right to put another under such a difficulty that he must either hurt the person by telling the truth or hurt himself by telling what is not true. . . . Therefore a man who is asked by an author what he thinks of his work is put to the torture, and is not obliged to speak the truth; so that what he says is not considered as his opinion, yet he has said it and cannot retract his opinion." (Dr. Johnson.)

Self-depreciation.

Dr. Johnson: "All censure of a man's self is oblique praise. It is in order to show how much he can spare. It has all the invidiousness of self-praise, and all the reproach of falsehood."

Boswell: "Sometimes it may proceed from a man's strong consciousness of his faults being observed. He knows that others would throw him down, and he had better lie down softly, of his own accord."

Dr. Johnson: "It is thus that mutual cowardice keeps us in peace. Were one half of mankind brave and one half cowards, the brave would be always beating the cowards. Were all brave, they would lead a very uneasy life; all would be continually fighting; but all being cowards, we get on together very well."

Wine.

S: So, sir, wine is a key which opens a box, and this box may be either free or empty.

J: Nay, sir, conversation is the key; wine is a pick-lock which forces open the box and injures it. A man should cultivate his mind so as to have that confidence and readiness without wine, which wine gives.

October 25. She *has* large appetites but they can be satisfied—except when we've really got her—herself somehow or other in the soup tureen. Then she could—Oh! she *would* eat for ever—and

Try this little bit, Jones? Don't you like it? What's the matter with it? Hasn't it got enough flavour—

Caution.

Said the snail,
In delicate armour of silver mail:
"Before too late
I must know my fate,

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I must crawl
Along the wall,
Succeed or fall."
Timid, cautious, one fine morn
She put forth one quivering horn.
Something bit her—
No—hit her.
She expired—
No—retired.
Two ants
Carrying a grain of chaff
Stopped to laugh.
"Come out! Come cut!
That hit on the snout
Was only a seed
Blown by some weed.
You haven't begun
To have any fun."
"But I've had my fright,
That's Life enough—quite!"
Said the snail.

(November, 1918.)

The Butterfly.

"What a day to be born!
And what a place!"
Cried the flowers.
"Mais tu as de la chance, ma chère!"
Said the wild geranium
Who was very travelled.
The champions, the blue-bells,
The daisies and buttercups,
The bright little eyebright and the white nettle-flower,
And a thousand others—
All were there to greet her;

The Butterfly

And growing so high, so high,
Right up to the sky, thought the butterfly,
On either side of a little lane.
"Only, my dear," breathed an old snail
Who was hugging the underside of a dock-leaf,
"Don't attempt to cross over.
Keep to this side.
The other side is just the same as this—
Believe me—just the same flowers, just the same green-
ness.
Stay where you are, and have your little flutter in peace!"
That was enough for the butterfly.
"What an idea! Never to go out into the open?
Never to venture forth?
To live, creeping up and down this side!"
Her wings quivered with scorn.
"Really," said she, "I am not a snail!"
And away she flew.
But just at that moment a dirty-looking dog,
Its mean tail between its legs,
Came loping down the lane.
It just glanced aside at the butterfly—did not bite—
Just gave a feeble snap and ran further.
But she was dead.
Little fleck of cerise and black,
She lay in the dust.
Everybody was sorry except the bracken,
Which never cares about anything, one way or the other.
(November, 1918.)

November. I confess that these last days my fight with the enemy has been so hard that I just laid down my weapons and ran away, and consented to do what has always seemed to me the final intolerable thing, i.e. to go into a sanatorium.

Scrapbook 1918

To-day, finally thinking it over, and in view of the fact that it is not, after all, so much a question of *climate* as of *regime* (there are very successful sanatoria in Hampstead and Highgate), I am determined, by my own will, to live the sanatorium life *here*.

(1) Father shall have built for me a really good shelter in the garden where I can lie all day.

(2) He shall also give us two good anthracite stoves.

(3) I shall buy a complete Jaeger outfit for the weather.

(4) I shall have a food chart and live by it.

(5) This new servant releases L. M. who has consented to give her whole time to me—as a nurse.

(6) Sorapure shall still be my doctor.

I shall have a separate bedroom *always and live by rule*.

You must have a bed in your dressing-room when the servant comes.

(7) I shall NOT WORRY.

You see, Jack, for the first time to-day I am determined to get well as Mother would be determined for me. If we are depressed, we must keep apart. But I am going through with this, and I want you to help me. It *can* be done.

The Resolve

Other people have done this in Hampstead.
Why not I?

Anything else, any institutional existence, would kill me—or being alone, cut off, ill with the other ill. I have really taken my courage up and I'm not going to drop it. I *know* it's possible.

1919

H. M. Tomlinson.

In *The Athenæum*, April 18, 1919, Katherine reviewed H. M. Tomlinson's *Old Junk* under the title "A Citizen of the Sea". The meaning of her title is given in the sentence: "We feel that he is calm, not because he has renounced life, but because he lives in the memory of that solemn gesture with which the sea blesses or dismisses or destroys her own." The review concludes:—

"He is alive; real things stir him profoundly. He has no need to exaggerate or heighten his effects. One is content to believe that what he tells you, happened to him and it was the important thing; it was the spiritual truth which was revealed. This is the life, changeless and unchanging, wonderfully conveyed to us in the pages of *Old Junk*. There is a quality in the prose that one might wish to call 'magic'; it is full of the quivering light and rainbow colours of the unsubstantial shore. One might dream as one puts the book down that one has only to listen, to hear the tide, on the turn, then sweeping in full and strong."

But Katherine was dissatisfied with the review. She commented on it in her scrapbook:—

"Too vague. Too much in the air. *Un-*

telling. Rebecca West beat me to a frazzle on the same subject. She got, in my school, 98 marks; I got 44."

Nevertheless, she pasted on the opposite page a letter of appreciation from H. M. Tomlinson. "I told J. M. M., and it is quite true, your review of my book was more to me than the Legion of Honour. And how finely the decoration was bestowed! When a reviewer who writes like that, can give so noticeable a tribute to another writer, the honour is more than doubled."

Perambulations.

She told me she dreamed she took her darling to a publisher, and, having placed it upon the altar, she made obeisance and waited to hear if it should be found worthy in his sight for a sacrifice. And he asked her how old she was. She had to confess that, though she had seen him quite recently and they had spent a wonderful time together, she never would see Thirty again.

"But, my dear madam," said the publisher, wonderingly taking up her darling, "I understood you to say this was your *first* novel? Ah, perhaps you meant it was your *last*, on the 'last shall be first' principle. Hee-haw! Oh, I say—rather nice, don't you think? Oh, neat—very neat! You writing people ought to come to us for a tip or two occasionally. What?"

At his words, age—great age—descended upon her. She heard herself say in a prim, elderly

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voice, "No, it really is my first novel." And she held out her arms for her darling.

Said he, handing it back to her, "You know, I should have had this fourteen or fifteen years ago. At your time of life, dear lady, you ought to be either writing your memoirs or crackin' up the new generation. We've no use for anything in the creative line that's not brought to market in the green ear. We can't have enough of it." And he waved her out of the temple, crying triumphantly, "'The greener the ear, the sweeter the meat!'"

At this she shivered so dreadfully that she woke up. "So you see," she ended mournfully, "we are condemned for years to sentimental journeys in perambulators: more and more young men and maidens caught up as they lean from parental windows admiring the 'sticky buds', and strapped in and whirled off down the bright avenues and through the little back streets, up and down the City Road—of the hour—and in and out the Eagle—of the moment—in Life's ramshackle old baby-carriage. And theirs is the only comment upon life, at present, shrill enough to be heard, and persistent enough to be wondered at."

"So the future of us and those like us is quite plain to me. We are doomed to pass these delicious hours of our fine flowering not only unwept (which doesn't matter so much), but quite absolutely unhonoured and unsung—which does. The path upon which we linger is the path of the perambulator, too. Our one high excitement will be to stop the nurse occasionally and gush

over her incredible charge. You hear us—Didums manage to blow his little trumpet so loud? or to throw his pretty public school so far, or to put out her little tongue and hit our admiring fingers such a rap with her naughty macaw.”

“And the worst of it is, every time we admire the child it will come back for more with such rapidity. It will merely be whisked round the corner and back again—bigger, brighter, bolder than ever. . . . Why are you staring at me?”

I was looking, dearest, at your nose.

“It is, isn’t it,” said she, stroking it with a finger, “a charming little nose? Every time I greet it in the glass I thank the Lord and my precious little mother for giving me hers and sparing me papa’s. . . . But why has it flashed upon your outward eye so particularly just at this moment?”

“It seemed to me—fancy, perhaps . . . you haven’t hurt it in any way? You haven’t knocked it or caught it in anything, or blown it unmercifully—or—it’s ridiculous—it’s absurd—it must be an effect of light.”

.?

“But from where I am sitting it does look just the weeniest—teeniest—just the slightest shade—out of joint.”

Perambulations was printed in *The Athenæum*, May 2, 1919. Katherine cut it out and commented:—

“You seem to have a mania for ‘such’—a detestable word, and the weakest of links in a

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chain—and 'so'. You'd better stop playing that particular tune now: *nous avons assez entendu sonner.*"

"Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had, besides the things I have mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jew's harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool-cannon, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, *a kitten with only one eye . . .*" (Mark Twain: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.*)

Not true!

Sunset.

A beam of light was shaken out of the sky
On to the brimming tide, and there it lay,
Palely tossing like a creature condemned to die
Who had loved the bright day.

"Ah, who are these that wing through the shadowy air?"
She cries, in agony. "Are they coming for me?"
The big waves croon to her: "Hush now! There-
now-there!
There is nothing to see."

But her white arms lift to cover her shining head,
And she presses close to the waves to make herself
small . . .
On their listless knees the beam of light lies dead
And the birds of shadow fall.

Men and Women

Men and Women.

"I get on best with women,"
She laughed and crumbled her cake.
"Men are such unknown country.
I never know how to take
What they say, nor how they mean it
And—oh, well they *are* so queer,
So—don't you know?—*so*—this and that.
You know what I mean, my dear!

"With women it's so much simpler,"
She laughed and cuddled her muff.
"One doesn't have to keep smiling—
Now what have I said?—It's enough
To chat over nothing important.
That *is* such a rest, I find,
In these strenuous days, don't you know, dear?
They put *such* a strain on the mind."

Friendship.

When we were charming *Backfisch*
With curls and velvet bows
We shared a charming kitten
With tiny velvet toes.

It was so gay and playful;
It flew like a woolly ball
From my lap to your shoulder—
And, oh, it was so small,

So warm—and so obedient
If we cried: "That's enough!"
It lay and slept between us,
A purring ball of fluff.

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But now that I am thirty
And she is thirty-one,
I shudder to discover
How wild our cat has run.

It's bigger than a Tiger,
It's eyes are jets of flame,
Its claws are gleaming daggers,
Could it have once been tame?

Take it away; I'm frightened!
But she, with placid brow,
Cries: "This is our Kitty-witty!
Why don't you love her now?"

"My cough is considerably better, I am sunburnt, they tell me I am fatter, but the other day I almost fell down and I fancied for a minute that I was dying. I was walking along the avenue with the prince, our neighbour, and was talking, when all at once something seemed to *break* in my chest, I had a feeling of *warmth* and *suffocation*, there was a singing in my ears, I remembered that I had been having palpitations for a long time and thought—'They must have meant something, then.' I went rapidly towards the verandah, on which visitors were sitting, and had one thought—that it would be awkward to fall down and die before strangers; but I went into my bedroom, drank some water and recovered."

(Tchehov's letters: *April* 21, 1894.)

(Ospedaletti, 1919.)

Lame Ducks

[The italicizing is Katherine's: it means that Katherine had undergone Tchchov's experience at the Casetta, in the autumn of 1919.]

Lame Ducks.

It is seldom that lame ducks are seen together. As a rule, so profoundly unaware do they appear to be of one another's existence one is almost tempted to believe that a lame duck to a lame duck really is invisible. They may frequent the same cafés for years, attend the same studio parties, feed at the same restaurants, even sit with the same group round a table, but when the others get up to go, the lame duck's way is with these—to the right—and the other—with those, to the left.

I wish he would cross his legs and rest his hands on his knee. But no, he sprawls, his shoulders hunched, his hands stuffed in his pockets, staring at his feet. They do look very curious, pressed so flat against the curved floor of the cab; the toes turned in and the shoes appear for some reason to be made not of leather,—of gun-metal.

"I dream that the dearest I ever knew
Has died and been entombed.
I am sure it's a dream that cannot be true. . . .

Yet stays this nightmare too appalling,
And like a web shakes me,
And piteously I keep on calling,
And no-one wakes me."

(Thomas Hardy.)

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The New Husband.

Someone came to me and said,
"Forget, forget that you've been wed!
Who's your man to leave you be
Ill and cold in a far country?
Who's the husband—who's the stone
Could leave a child like you alone?"

"You're like a leaf caught in the wind;
You're like a lamb that's left behind
When all the flock has pattered away;
You're like a pitiful little stray
Kitten that I'd put in my vest;
You're like a bird that's fallen from nest.

"We've none of us too long to live,
Then take me for your man and give
Me all the keys to all your fears
And let me kiss away these tears.
Creep close to me. I mean no harm,
My darling! Let me make you warm."

I had received that very day
A letter from the other to say
That in six months—he hoped—no longer,
I would be so much better and stronger
That he could close his books and come
With radiant looks to bear me home.

Ha! Ha! Six months, six weeks, six hours
Among these glittering palms and flowers,
With Melancholy at my side
For my old nurse, and for my guide
Despair—and for my footman Pain,
. . . I'll never see my home again.

The New Husband

Said my new husband: "Little dear,
It's time we were away from here;
In the road below there waits my carriage
Ready to drive us to our marriage;
Within my house the feast is spread
And the maids are baking the bridal bread."

I thought with grief upon that other;
But then why should he aught discover
Save that I pined away and died?
So I became the stranger's bride,
And every moment—however fast
It flies—we live as 'twere our last!

(December 8, 1919.)

December 17. We had been for two years drifting into a relationship different to anything I had ever known. We had been *children* to each other, openly confessed children, telling each other everything, and each depending equally upon the other. Before that, I had been the man and he had been the woman, and he had been called upon to make no real efforts. He had never really 'supported' me. When we first met, in fact, it was I who kept him, and afterwards we had always acted (more or less) like men friends. Then this illness, getting worse and worse, and turning me into a woman and asking him to put himself away, to *bear* things for me. He stood it marvellously. It helped very much because it was a 'romantic' disease (his love of a 'romantic appearance' is *immensely* real) and also being 'children' together gave us a practically unlimited chance to play at life—

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not to live. It was child love. Yes, I think the most marvellous, the most radiant love that this earth knows: terribly rare. We've had it. But we were not *pure*. If we had been, he would have faced coming away with me. And that he would not do. He would not have said he was too tired to earn enough to keep us here. He always refused to face what it meant—living alone for two years on not much money. He said, and three-quarters of him believed: "I couldn't stand the strain of it with you ill." But it was a lie, and a confession that all was not well with us. And I always knew it. Nevertheless, I played up, and truly even in October I clung to him still—still the child—seeing as our salvation a house in the country in England *not later than next May* and then never to be apart again. The letters ended all of it. *Was* it the letters? I must not forget something else. All these two years I have been obsessed by the fear of death.

December. My life with J. I'm not inclined to relive. It doesn't enter my head. Where that life was is just a blank. The future—the present—life with him is not. It has got to be lived. There is nothing in it. Something has stopped—a wall has been raised and it's too recent for me to desire to go there even. Wait till it looks a little less new . . . is the feeling. I'm not in the least curious either, and not in the least inclined to lament.

If one wasn't so afraid—why should I be? this isn't going to be read by Bloomsbury *et Cie*—

I'd say we had a child—a love-child, and it's dead. We may have other children, but this child can't be made to live again. J. says: Forget that letter! How can I? It killed the child—*killed* it *really* and *truly* for ever as far as I am concerned. But I don't doubt that, if I live, there will be other children, but there won't be that child.

In the Bath.

She liked to lie in the bath and very gently swish the water over her white jellified old body. As she lay there, her arms at her sides, her legs straight out, she thought: "This is how I shall look, this is how they will arrange me in my coffin." And it seemed to her, as she gazed at herself, terribly true that people were made to fit coffins—made in the shape of coffins. Just then she saw her wet shining toes as they were pressed against the end of the bath. They looked so gay, so unconscious of their fate. They seemed really to be smiling all in a row—the little toes so small. "Oh!" She gave the sponge a tragic squeeze.

Secret Flowers.

Is love a light for me? A steady light,
A lamp within whose pallid pool I dream
Over old love-books? Or is it a gleam,
A lantern coming towards me from afar
Down a dark mountain? Is my love a star?
Ah me! so high above—so coldly bright!

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The fire dances. Is my love a fire
Leaping down the twilight ruddy and bold?
Nay, I'd be frightened of him. I'm too cold
For quick and eager loving. There's a gold
Sheen on these flower petals as they fold
More truly mine, more like to my desire.

The flower petals fold. They are by the sun
Forgotten. In a shadowy wood they grow
Where the dark trees keep up a to-and-fro
Shadowy waving. Who will watch them shine
When I have dreamed my dream? Ah, darling mine,
Find them, gather them for me one by one.

1920

January 15.

“But I was called from the earth—yea, called
Before my rose-bush grew;
And would that now I knew
What feels he of the tree I planted,
And whether, after I was called
To be a ghost, he, as of old,
Gave me his heart anew.”

(Thomas Hardy.)

January. Women walking across the fields to their men, idling in the swooning light, the sun trembling in the lemon-trees.

In the stillness the sound of the birds. Why hath the Lord not made *bun* trees?

Grey houses, red blinds, white mousseline curtains, and Oh! the replica within!

When the soldiers bent to strip, their hair blew in the wind. This gave them such a defenceless, *innocent* appearance.

I realized that I had been here before. There came a smell of wood and something dark, burnt out, and yet with a kind of glow still.

The street so smooth and arched like the curves of thought, and up there walked sailors with their bundles, very like flies carrying their eggs in the hot sun.

The trees at this hour look so full of leisure

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and inclined to the earth as though they were in love with the shape of their own shadows.

“How do you know, deep underground,
Hid in your bed from sight and sound,
Without a turn in temperature,
With weather life can scarce endure,
That light has won a fraction's strength,
And day put on some moment's length,
Whereof in merest rote will come,
Weeks hence, mild airs that do not numb;
O crocus root, how do you know,
How do you know?”

(Thomas Hardy.)

Winter Bird.

My bird, my darling,
Calling through the cold of afternoon
Those round, bright notes,
Each one so perfect,
Shaken from the other and yet
Hanging together in flashing clusters!
The small soft flowers and the ripe fruits—
All are gathered.
It is the season now of nuts and berries
And round, bright, flashing drops
In the frozen grass.

The Letters of Anton Tchekov.

“Here, *as usual*, he met with severe weather.”

“Purely external causes are sufficient to make one unjust to oneself, suspicious and morbidly sensitive.”

Tchehov's Letters

"Better say to man 'My angel' than hurl 'Fool' at his head—though men are more like fools than they are like angels."

"I have always felt strange when people whose death was at hand talked, smiled, or wept in my presence; but here, when I see on the verandah this blind woman who laughs, jokes, or hears my stories read to her, what begins to seem strange to me is not that she is dying, but that we do not feel our own death, and write stories as though we were never going to die."

"My business is merely to be talented—i.e. to know how to distinguish important statements from unimportant, how to throw light on the characters, and to speak their language."

"It is better to put your colour on too faint than too strong."

"An incomprehensible impulse of defiance mastered me—that impulse which made me bathe from the yacht in the middle of the Black Sea and has impelled me to not a few acts of folly."

"There is no greater enjoyment in life than sleep when one is sleepy."

"When one is travelling one absolutely must be alone. To sit in a chaise or in a room alone with one's thoughts is much more interesting than being with people."

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"So you like my story? Well, thank God! of late I have become devilishly suspicious and uneasy. I am constantly fancying that my trousers are horrid, and that I am writing not as I want to, and that I am giving my patients the wrong powders. It must be a special neurosis."

"Tolstoy denies mankind immortality, but my God! how much that is personal there is in it! The day before yesterday I read his 'Afterword'. Strike me dead! but it is stupider and stuffier than 'Letters to a Governor's Wife', which I despise."

"Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet. Ham only noticed that his father was a drunkard, and completely lost sight of the fact that he was a genius, that he had built an ark and saved the world.

Writers must not imitate Ham, bear that in mind."

"A public confession 'I am a sinner, a sinner, a sinner' is such pride that it made me feel uncomfortable."

"Tolstoy! In these days he is not a man but a super-man, a Jupiter."

"From here, far away, people seem very good, and that is natural, for in going away into the country we are not hiding from people but from our vanity, which in town among people is unjust and active beyond measure.

Tchegov's Letters

Looking at the spring, I have a dreadful longing that there should be paradise in the other world. In fact, at moments I am so happy that I superstitiously pull myself up and remind myself of my creditors, who will one day drive me out of the Australia I have so happily won."

"When you depict sad or unlucky people, and want to touch people's hearts, try to be colder—it gives their grief, as it were, a background, against which it stands out in sharper relief."

"I haven't a halfpenny, but the way I look at it is this: the rich man is not he who has plenty of money, but he who has the means to live now in the luxurious surroundings given us by early spring."

"You may weep and moan over your stories, you may suffer together with your heroes, but I consider one must do this so that the reader does not notice it. The more objective, the stronger will be the effect."

"When one thinks of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* all these young ladies of Turgenev's, with their seductive shoulders, fade away into nothing."

"The descriptions of nature are fine, but I feel that we have already got out of the way of such descriptions and that we need something different."

"Something in me protests: reason and justice tell me that in the electricity and heat

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of love for man there is something greater than chastity and abstinence from meat."

"I, too, want 'something sour', and that's not a mere chance feeling, for I notice the same mood in others round me. It is just as if they had all been in love, had fallen out of love, and now were looking for some new distraction."

"The thought that I must, that I ought to, write never leaves me for an instant."

"I think that nearness to Nature and idleness are essential elements of happiness; without them it is impossible." . . .

"I should like to meet a philosopher like Nietzsche somewhere in a train or steamer, and to spend the whole night talking to him."

So should I, old boy!

"The object of the novel (one of Sinkiewicz's) is to lull the bourgeoisie to sleep in its golden dreams. Be faithful to your wife, pray with her over the prayer-book, save money, love sport, and all is well with you in this world and the next. The bourgeoisie is very fond of so-called practical types and novels with happy endings, since they soothe it with the idea that one can both create capital and preserve innocence, be a beast and at the same time be happy."

"A man can deceive his fiancée or his mistress as much as he likes, and, in the eyes of a

Tchehov's Letters

woman he loves, an ass may pass for a philosopher; but a daughter is a different matter."

"They tell me to eat six times and are indignant with me for eating, as they think, very little."

"You complain that my heroes are gloomy—alas! that's not my fault. This happens apart from my will, and when I write it does not seem to me that I am writing gloomily."

"I am going to build so as to have a place in which to spend the winters. The prospect of continual wandering with hotel rooms, hotel porters, chance cooking, and so on, alarms my imagination."

"The most important screw in family life is love, sexual attraction, one flesh; all the rest is dreary and cannot be reckoned upon, however cleverly we make our calculations.

To marry is interesting only for love; to marry a girl simply because she is nice is like buying something one does not want at a bazaar solely because it is of good quality."

Compare: "I made some cheap purchases: if anything *not wanted* can be cheap." (Crabb Robinson: *June 26, 1820.*)

"You must once and for all give up² being worried about successes and failures. Don't let that concern you. It's your duty to go on working steadily day by day, quite quietly, to

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be prepared for mistakes, which are inevitable, for failures—and let other people count the calls before the curtain.”

“The immense majority of people are nervous: the greater number suffer, and a small proportion feel acute pain; but where—in streets and in houses—do you see people tearing about, leaping up, and clutching at their heads? Suffering ought to be expressed as it is expressed in life—that is, not by the arms and legs, but by the tone and expression; not by gesticulation, but by grace.”

The Flowering of the Self.

When autograph albums were the fashion—sumptuous volumes bound in soft leather, and pages so delicately tinted that each tender sentiment had its own sunset sky to faint, to die upon—the popularity of that most sly, ambiguous, difficult piece of advice: “To thine own self be true” was the despair of collectors. How dull it was, how boring, to have the same thing written six times over! And then, even if it was Shakespeare, that didn’t prevent it—oh, *l’âge d’innocence!*—from being dreadfully obvious. Of course, it followed as the night the day that if one was true to oneself . . . True to oneself! which self? Which of my many—well, really, that’s what it looks like coming to—hundreds of selves? For what with complexes and repressions and reactions and vibrations and reflections, there are

The Flowering of the Self

moments when I feel I am nothing but the small clerk of some hotel without a proprietor, who has all his work cut out to enter the names and hand the keys to the wilful guests.

Nevertheless, there are signs that we are intent as never before on trying to puzzle out, to live by, our own particular self. *Der Mensch muss frei sein*—free, disentangled, single. Is it not possible that the rage for confession, autobiography, especially for memories of earliest childhood, is explained by our persistent yet mysterious belief in a self which is continuous and permanent; which, untouched by all we acquire and all we shed, pushes a green spear through the dead leaves and through the mould, thrusts a scaled bud through years of darkness until, one day, the light discovers it and shakes the flower free and—we are alive—we are flowering for our moment upon the earth. This is the moment which, after all, we live for,—the moment of direct feeling when we are most ourselves and least personal.

(July, 1920.)

The Baby.

Call for him once a week!

"No!" he said, lowering his withered legs from the sofa and rubbing his knee-joints, "I'll wait a bit yet before I'm called for."

She was pinning on her hat in the mirror above the mantelpiece, but when he said that, she turned round and stared—a long pin in her

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hand. "I'm sure I don't know what you mean," she said loftily.

He sucked in his cheeks and rubbed away, blinking.

Even as he thought this, he collapsed, he fell sideways on the pillows, and suddenly . . . in a voice that he had never heard before—a high, queer, rasping voice that got louder, angrier and shriller every moment—he began to cry.

How beautiful little children are! I shall kneel before them and . . .

"Beside old Semyon he looked graceful and vigorous, but yet in his walk there was something just perceptible which betrayed in him a being already touched with decay, weak, and on the road to ruin." (Tchehov: *The Schoolmistress*.)

August 8.

A. B. B. (Anne Burnell Beauchamp: Katherine's mother) died August 8, 1918.

"How she would have loved
A party to-day!—
Bright-hatted and gloved,
With table and tray
And chairs on the lawn!
Her smiles would have shone
With welcomings . . . But
She is shut, she is shut
From friendship's spell
In the jailing shell
Of her tiny cell."

(Thomas Hardy.)

Getting a Breath

August 9. I must ask Doctor Sorapure what is the immediate treatment for, and what are the symptoms of, fractured base.

I cough and cough. . . . Life is—getting a new breath . . . And J. is silent, hangs his head, hides his face with his fingers *as though* it were unendurable. “This is what she is doing to me! Every fresh sound makes *my* nerves wince.” I know he can’t help these feelings. But, oh God! how wrong they are. If he could only for a minute, serve me, help me, give *himself* up. I can so imagine an account by him of a ‘calamity’. “I could do nothing all day, *my* hands trembled, I had a sensation of *utter* cold. At times I felt the strain would be unbearable, at others a *merciful numbness* . . .” and so on. What a fate to be self-imprisoned! What a ghastly fate! At such times I feel I never could get well with him. It’s like having a cannon-ball tied to one’s feet when one is trying not to drown. It is just like that.

Bought and Paid for. A bouquet—all her expenses—sometimes only vegetables to bring away. Fortune-teller and crystal-gazer.

The Dud. This is in Society. We know it all. Then Wyndham is his friend and in his trouble appeals to him—in *vain*. One mustn’t forget his writing-table, so exquisite, and his graceful style of reply. To write a letter was a little act of ritual. . . . His rooms are off Baker Street—Upper Gloucester Place, in fact.

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August 19. J. let fall this morning the fact that he *had* considered taking rooms in D.'s house this winter. Good. Was their relationship friendship? Oh no! He kissed her and held her arm and they were certainly conscious of a dash of something far more dangerous than *l'amitié pure*. And then he considered taking rooms in her house. He said, "Doesn't H. live there, too?" But H. never had the beginnings of such a relation with D. as J. knows. I suppose one always thinks the latest shock is the worst shock. This is quite unlike any other I have ever suffered. The lack of sensitiveness as far as I am concerned—the selfishness of this staggers me. This is what I must remember when I am away. J. thinks no more of me than of anybody else. I mean I am the same: the *degree* of his feeling is different, but it's the same feeling. I must remember he's one of my friends—no more. Who could count on such a man! To plan all this at such a time, and then on my return *the first words*: I must be nice to D. How disgustingly indecent! I am simply *disgusted* to my very soul.

I've read this over to-day (December 8, 1920) and now I wouldn't mind a straw if he went and lived there. Why on earth not? I don't love him less, but I do love him differently. I don't aspire to a *personal* life; I shall never know it. I must remind him to do so at Christmas.

And again I read this over (June 6, 1921) and it seemed to me very stupid and strange that we

The Dance

should have hidden from each other. By stupid I mean of course stupid in me to write such stuff.

And again (July 24, 1921). Neither stupid nor strange. We both failed.

A Dance at the —.

Is Life going to be all like this? thought Laura. And she lay down in bed and put her arms round the pillow, and the pillow whispered: "Yes, this is what Life is going to be like—only always more and more splendid—more and more marvellous!"

"But supposing," said Laura, speaking very fast and with the greatest possible earnestness, "supposing you were terrifically successful and were married to the person you adored, and you had every single thing you wanted,—and your first child was just born (that's supposed to be a marvellous moment, isn't it?), would you be really happier than you are now?"

They stared hard at each other a moment.

"I simply couldn't be."

At his words Laura gave a beaming smile, a great sigh, and squeezed her brother's arm. "Oh, what a relief!" she said. "Neither could I—not possible."

"Laura! Laurie! What *are* you doing up there? Come down at once. The N.'s have arrived!"

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Laura stooped down and kissed her grandmother. "You're by far the most beautiful girl in the rooms, my little precious!" she whispered.

As Grandma passed on, the Major and Laura suddenly turned round to catch her eye. She raised her eyebrows in a very childish astounded way, and sucked in her cheeks. The old woman actually blushed.

The Wordsworths.

"All the Journals contain numerous trivial details, which bear ample witness to the 'plain living and high thinking' of the Wordsworth household—and, in this edition, samples of those details are given—but there is no need to record all the cases in which the sister wrote, 'To-day I mended William's shirts', or 'William gathered sticks', or 'I went in search of eggs', etc., etc." (W. Knight: Introduction to *Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal*.)

There is! Fool!

"I went through the fields, and sat for an hour afraid to pass a cow. The cow looked at me, and I looked at the cow, and whenever I stirred the cow gave over eating." (Dorothy Wordsworth.)

"I have thoughts that are fed by the sun." (Dorothy Wordsworth.)

It was Southey who made the charming remark that no house was complete unless it had in it a child rising six years and a kitten rising six months.

Charles Lamb.

"Dear Manning,—Certainly you could not have called at all hours from two till ten, for we have been only out of an evening Monday and Tuesday this week. But if you think you have, your thought shall go for the deed. We did pray for you on Wednesday night: Oysters unusually luscious—pearls of extraordinary magnitude formed in them. I have made bracelets of them—given them in clusters to ladies.

Last night we went out in despite, because you were not to come at your hour.

This night we shall be at home, so shall we certainly both Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Take your choice, mind I don't say of one, but choose which evening you will not, and come the other four. Doors open at five o'clock. Shells forced about nine. Every gentleman smokes or not as he pleases. O! I forgot, bring the £10, for fear you should lose it. C. L."

A 'darling' letter!

After the talk with D. there *is* a change.
"He woke and still with his eyes closed he turned

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and kissed her shoulder." That's a good beginning.

I believe that D. has the secret of my recovery and J's awakening. All that he spoke of yesterday . . . the terms were strange, but what he *said* was what she had known for a long time. He made the Casetta story plainer. I saw how it could be made to 'fit'.

But this short sketch for Boulestin must be extremely simple and yet decisive. . . . It must not be in even the slightest degree 'thin'. If I can include the glittering sheep, the pond . . .

[The sketch which Katherine then had in mind for M. Boulestin's *Keepsake* apparently developed into "At the Bay." It was not published in *The Keepsake*, to which she sent "The Black Cap" instead.]

Twelfth Night. Viola.

"If we should be a prey, how much 'twere better
To fall before the lion than the wolf."

Some are born . . ., some achieve . . ., and some
have . . . thrust upon them . . .

At mid-day the Walking Club streamed through the ancient beautiful gates and clattered over the cobble-stones of the inn courtyard. They disturbed a great ring of blue and white pigeons pecking among the stones; away they flew with a soft clapping. (*Second Helping.*)

At Mary Rose

"Something to do with Lilacs—an old air of France."

Le temps des lilas et le temps des roses
Ne viendra plus ce printemps-ci.

The Persones Tale.

He is a jabbere and a gabber.

I think the only thing which is really bad about me, really incurable, is my temper.

"Courage, my darling!" But the soft word was fatal. Down fell her tears.

"'Tis a morning to tempt Jove from his ningle."

The inaudible and noiseless foot of time.

The word which haunts me is *egocentric*.

Rising above all pain, and all infirmity—rising above everything.

The little heads were like pink fondants in a girl's lined chocolate-box.

"You can invent anything you like, but you can't invent psychology." (Tolstoy to Tchehov.)

At Mary Rose.

"It's something I know. I *must* have heard it." Her head was bound with old purple grapes.
The introductory music raking the hard soil

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of our heart and preparing it for fairy seed. The voices of the singers were like celestial *gargling*.

The Australian soldier *rattles* on the stairs. His whole manner and the loud voices. They should have been all vague and remote. The light should have been dim.

"He's very complicated, Barrie, but charming—oh, so charming! Modern—quite modern—the same author!"

Act I. Sc. I. The clergyman is a little fantastic. The other man overacts. *We'll be good, won't we?* Fantastic.

The scene on the island is *terrific*. It is a terrible *idea*. And as soon as it was over, the tea, the Maid of the Mountains. Quick, quick, quick! And the heads—the old heads and the young heads—"How he ever thought of it is beyond me!"

"But they don't progress, do they? They don't go out into the world. Is that good for a country? . . . Oh, a lovely life! I should like my husband to be a farmer . . . But the natives are nice, aren't they, when they are young?"

"Touch and go the day of the attack. I got the orders by phone and scrambled off with them to my officer—putting a two-franc piece down my collar, inside my shirt for luck. We all sat together. I knew it was all up with me. So did Austen. Our number was up. The feeling of *waste*! My hand on the hilt of a revolver. You can always turn it on yourself. . . ."

A few days ago I went to see Mr. Barrie's as-successful-as-ever play *Mary Rose*, and what im-

pressed me chiefly were the extraordinary efforts considered necessary to prepare the audience for something strange, something out of the common, something which does not happen every day in that block of residential flats over the way. To begin with, while the lights still glared, the orchestra banged the good old "Gondoliers" about our heads, to such good effect that the lady in front of me did pause, did say to her friend: "My dear, don't I know that? Isn't it Carmen?" And then, before the curtain rose, the shaded lights, one by one, fainted, failed, gave up their little souls, and left us in the dark exposed to a kind of emotional raking process by the violins and violas, whereby the hard stony soil of our reluctant hearts was broken up and prepared for the magic seed the wizard should scatter. Voices joined the instruments, wordless, rising and falling in what sounded to be celestial gargling. . . .

En Voyage. Four little boys, one minute, three larking. When the three ran on to the lines and tried to dash themselves to death, the little one obviously suffered tortures and did his best to drag them back again. I realized this would have been just the same if it had been deep water.

An old man, an old woman, and a tiny boy in a cape. When the old woman disappeared, the ancient took the little boy with such tender care. He had a little pipe in his beard. It looked as though his beard were curling.

Poplars springing in green water—red willows.

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Tea on the Train.

A man poked his head in at the door and said tea was served.

"Tea! Dear me!" she fussed at once. "Would you care to go? . . . Shall we, do you think? On the other hand, I have some tea here. I'm afraid it will not be very good. Tea that is not fresh . . . and then there is that odd taste—what it is I do not know, but . . . Shall we care to try it?"

"Might as well."

"In that case, dear, perhaps you would not mind lifting down my suit-case? I am sorry to say the tea is in there. Such a bother! These racks are so very high. I think they are decidedly higher than the English racks. Mind! Do take care! Oh!"

He: "Ugh!"

Finally, she spread out a piece of paper, put on it a little cup and an odd saucer, the top of the thermos flask, a medicine bottle of milk, and some sugar in a lozenge-tin. "I am very much afraid . . ." said she. "Would you like me to try it first?"

He looked over the top of his paper and said drily: "Pour it out!"

She poured it out, and gave him the cup and saucer, of course, while she gave the most uncomfortable little dripping cup in the world to herself and sipped, anxiously watching him. "It is so very . . .?"

"Might be worse!"

Fidgeting in her handbag, first she pulled out

Tea on the Train

a powder-puff, then a nice substantial handkerchief, and then a paper parcel that held a very large wedge of cake—of the kind known as Dundee.

This she cut with a penknife, while he watched with some emotion.

"This is the last of our precious Dundee," said she, shaking her head over it, and cutting it so tenderly that it almost seemed an act of cannibalism.

"That's one thing I have learned," said he, "and that is never to come abroad without one of Buszard's Dundees."

Oh, how she agreed!

And each taking a large wedge, they bit into it and ate solemnly with round astonished eyes like little children in a confectioner's shop who are allowed to eat sitting up to the counter.

"More tea, dear?"

"No thanks."

She: "?" A glance. (I sympathise with her glance for reply.)

"I think I will just have a cup," said she gaily, so relieved to have a cup after all.

Another dive into the bag and chocolate was produced.

Chocolate! I had not realised before that chocolate is offered playfully. It is not a solemn food. It's as though one thought it rather absurd. But then—who knows? Perhaps . . .

"What?" said he, and peered over the paper. "No, no!" dismissing the chocolate.

She had thought as much.

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And having torn up little shreds of paper and wiped the cup and saucer and the knife clean, she packed it all tight again. But a final rummage in the bag produced an oval-shaped paper, which unwrapped was an egg! This sight seemed to fill her with amazement. But she must have known the egg was there. She did not look as though she had. Bright-eyed, her head on one side, she stared; and I fancied I heard an interrogatory clucking. . . .

Coleridge's Table Talk.

"It is intolerable when men, who have no other knowledge, have not even a competent understanding of that world in which they are always living, and to which they refer everything."

Hear! Hear!

"Although contemporary events obscure past events in a living man's life, yet, so soon as he is dead, and his whole life is a matter of history, one action stands out as conspicuously as another."

Totally wrong!

"Intense study of the Bible will keep any writer from being *vulgar* in point of style."

In point of *language*.

"I, for one, do not call the sod under my feet my country. But language, religion, laws,

Coleridge on Shakespeare

government, blood—identity in these makes men of one country.”

The sod under my feet makes *mine*.

“‘Most women have no character at all,’ said Pope, and meant it for satire. Shakespeare, who knew man and woman much better, saw that it, in fact, was the perfection of woman to be characterless. Everyone wishes a Desdemona or Ophelia for a wife—creatures who, though they may not always understand you, do always feel you and feel with you.”

Now you are being silly.

Coleridge's Lectures on Shakespeare.

Stage Illusion.

“Not only are we never absolutely deluded—or anything like it, but the attempt to cause the highest delusion possible to beings in their senses sitting in a theatre, is a gross fault, incident only to low minds, which, feeling that they cannot affect the heart or head permanently, endeavour to call forth the momentary affections. There ought never to be more pain than is compatible with co-existing pleasure, and to be amply repaid by thought.”

That is superb. Tchegov v. Barrie. Think here of *The Cherry Orchard*, where orchard, birds, etc., are quite unnecessary. The whole effect of dawn is produced by *blowing out the candle*.

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An author should "have felt so deeply on certain subjects, or in consequence of certain imaginations, as to make it *almost a necessity of his nature to seek for sympathy*—no doubt, with that honourable desire of permanent action which distinguishes genius."

"It is to be lamented that we judge of books by books, instead of referring what we read to our own experience."

"The second distinct cause of this diseased disposition of taste [i.e. perceiving strangeness in the language of the poetic drama where we should feel exultation] is the security, the comparative equability and *ever-increasing sameness of human life.*"

No! No! No!

"In his very first productions, Shakespeare projected his mind out of his own particular being, and felt, and made others feel, on subjects no way connected with himself, except by force of contemplation and that sublime faculty by which a great mind becomes that on which it meditates."

Thou hast said it, Coleridge!

"Or again imagination acts by so carrying on the eye of the reader as to make him almost lose the consciousness of words,—to make him see everything flashed, as Wordsworth has grandly and appropriately said,—

Taste and Morality

Flashed upon that inward eye.
Which is the bliss of solitude.

And this without exciting any painful or laborious attention, without *any anatomy of description*, (a fault not uncommon in descriptive poetry)—but with the sweetness and easy movement of nature.”

“There are men who can write passages of deepest pathos and even sublimity on circumstances personal to themselves and stimulative of their own passions; but they are not, therefore, on this account poets.”

Oh, Coleridge!

(October, 1920.)

“It is my earnest desire—my passionate endeavour—to enforce at various times and by various arguments and instances the close and reciprocal connexion of just taste with pure morality. Without that acquaintance with the heart of man, or that docility and childlike gladness to be made acquainted with it, which those only can have who dare look at their own hearts—and that with a steadiness which religion only has the power of reconciling with sincere humility;—without this and the modesty produced by it, I am deeply convinced that no man, however wide his erudition, however patient his antiquarian researches, can possibly understand, or be worthy of understanding the writings of Shakespeare.”

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Thou—thou art the man with whom I would speak. Should we mean the same by religion? We should not quarrel. (*October 21, 1920.*)

“Hamlet’s wildness is but half false; he plays that subtle trick of pretending to act only when he is very near really being what he acts.”

Profound.

“*Banquo* :

The earth hath bubbles, as the water has
And these are of them:—Whither are they vanished?

Macbeth :

Into the air; and what seemed corporal, melted
As breath into the wind.—Would they had staid!

Is it too minute to notice the appropriateness of the simile ‘as breath’, etc., in a cold climate?”

No; it’s perfect.

Coleridge on Hamlet.

“Anything finer than this conception and working out of a great character is merely impossible. Shakespeare wished to impress upon us the truth, that action is the chief end of existence—that no faculties of intellect, however brilliant, can be considered valuable, or indeed otherwise than as misfortunes, if they withdraw us from, or render us repugnant to

action, and lead us to think and think of doing, until the time has elapsed when we can do anything effectually. In enforcing this moral truth, Shakespeare has shown the fullness and force of his powers; all that is amiable and excellent in nature is combined in Hamlet, with the exception of one quality. He is a man living in meditation, called upon to act by every motive human and divine, but the great object of his life is defeated by continually resolving to do, yet doing nothing but resolve."

Who could understand that better than thou, Coleridge? I have no doubt that thou wert accusing thyself . . . And yet I wonder whether all great men, however developed their power of action, do not always think thus of themselves. They are ridden by the desire to act, and the performance is only the step to another . . . In another sense Fleance always escapes. (Or was that because Macbeth merely employed his murderers?) Be that as it may, Macbeth holds this phrase which has in it every faintest atom of the feelings of a writer: *This restlessness of ecstasy*.

This book—Coleridge's Essays and Lectures on Shakespeare—is certainly a great treasure. But I like to 'record' that there is much in it which was suited only to its time. I feel we have advanced very far since the days of Coleridge, and that he (because he is so restrained and handicapped by his *audience*) would have been far more enlightening about Shakespeare to-day.

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D. H. Lawrence.

I made these notes. Read them—will you?

The Lost Girl: It's important. It ought not to be allowed to pass.

The Times gave no inkling of what it was—never even hinted at its dark secret.

Lawrence denies his humanity. He denies the powers of the imagination. He denies life—I mean *human* life. His hero and heroine are non-human. They are animals on the prowl. They do not feel: they scarcely speak. There is not one memorable word. They submit to their physical response and for the rest go veiled, blind—*faceless, mindless*. This is the doctrine of mindlessness.

He says his heroine is extraordinary, and rails against *the ordinary*. Isn't that significant? But look at her. Take her youth—her thriving upon the horse-play with the doctors. They might be beasts butting each other—no more. Take the scene when the hero throws her in the kitchen, possesses her, and she returns singing to the washing-up. It's a *disgrace*. Take the rotten, rubbishy scene of the woman in labour asking the Italian into her bedroom. All false. All a pack of lies!

Take the nature-study at the end. It's no more than the grazing-place for Alvina and her sire. What was the "green hellebore" to her? Of course, there is a great deal of racy, bright, competent writing in the early part—the 'shop' part. But it doesn't take a writer to tell all that.

The whole is false—*ashes*. The preposterous Indian troupe of four young men is—a fake. But how on earth he can keep it up—is the problem. No, it's not. He has "given way". Why stop there?

Oh, don't forget where Alvina feels *a trill in her bowels*, and discovers herself with child. A TRILL. What does that mean? And why is it so peculiarly offensive from a man? Because it is *not on this plane* that the emotions of others are conveyed to the imagination. It's a kind of sinning against art.

Earth-closets, too. Do they exist, *qua* earth-closets? No. I might describe the queer noises coming from one when old Grandpa X was there—very strange cries and moans, and how the women who were washing stopped and shook their heads and pitied him, and even the children didn't laugh. Yes, I can imagine that. But that's not the same as to build an earth-closet because the former one was so exposed. No.

Am I prejudiced? Be careful! I feel privately as though L. had possessed an animal and had fallen under a curse. But I can't say that. All I know is: this is bad and ought not to be allowed. I feel a horror of it—a shrinking. But that's not criticism.

But this is life when one has blasphemed against the spirit of reverence.

Cassandra.

As Gertie the parlour-maid passed through the green-baize door that led from the kitchen regions,

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she nearly dropped the tray of dinner silver she was carrying. For there, beyond the stairs, in the very middle of the big dim hall stood Miss Cassandra—Mrs. Brook—wearing a little black hat with a thick black veil, a long black cape, and clasping her hands as if she was praying. Oh, she did give Gertie a turn—coming on her so sudden, and all in black, too, and standing there so strange. But immediately she saw Gertie, Miss Cassandra came to life, darted forward and said in her sweet husky voice—the servants loved Miss Cassandra's—Mrs. Brook's—voice: "Oh, good evening, Gertie. Where is Mother?"

"Good evening, Miss—Ma'am. In her room. She must have just about finished dressing."

"Is Father with her?" asked Cassandra, putting her hand on the banister.

"No, Miss. It's Wednesday. One of his late nights, you know."

"Oh, yes, I forgot." Then Cassandra said quickly: "Where are the others?"

"Miss Jinnie's in the drawing-room and Mr. Jack's in his dark-room."

"Thank you, Gertie. Then I'll run up."

And run she did—skimmed rather, like a bird.

She knocked at the big cream-panelled door and turned the glass handle.

"Mother, it's me. Can I come in?"

"Cassandra!" cried her mother. "Do, darling. Of course. What a surprise! What a strange hour!"

Mrs. Sheridan sat at the dressing-table, clasp-

ing her pearls. As she spoke, she settled them, and drew down her daughter's little dark head and kissed her. The black veil only came to Cassandra's nose. Her mother noticed that her lips were hot, and through the thick mesh her eyes looked dark, enormous. But that meant nothing with Cassandra. The child had been to a concert, or she'd been reading, or star-gazing simply, or tracking down a crying kitten. Anything threw Cassandra into a fever.

"Do you know how late it is, my child?" she said tenderly. "It's just on dinner-time. And I thought Richard only got back to-day."

"Yes, he did," said Cassandra. "This afternoon." She gave a little gasp.

"Then why didn't you . . .?" Her mother broke off. "But before we begin talking, darling . . . You'll stay to dinner, of course. I'll just let cook know. She'll be so *furious* if I don't." And she moved towards the bell beside the fireplace before Cassandra stopped her.

"No, mother, don't! I'm not stopping to dinner. I don't want any dinner." Suddenly she threw back her cape and with that gesture she seemed to reveal all her excitement and agitation. "I've only come to speak to you—to tell you something. Because I must—I simply *must*"—and here Cassandra clasped her hands as she had in the hall below—"confide in somebody."

"My precious child, don't be so tragic!" said her mother. "You're frightening me. You're not going to have a baby, are you? Because I'm

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no good at that kind of thing. What is it? And don't begin crying if you can help it. It's so exhausting!"

She was too late. Cassandra had begun. Pressing her little handkerchief to her eyes, she sobbed. "I can't talk in this room. I'm afraid we'll be interrupted. Come into my old room, Mother!" And away she sped down the passage into her bedroom that was next to the nursery.

The door of the cold, dim little room was shut behind them. Cassandra almost sprang upon her mother.

"Mother!" she cried. "I've been betrayed. I've been wickedly, cruelly, deceived. Richard's been false to me. But *so* false!" cried Cassandra, walking away from Mrs. Sheridan and shaking her little fist at the ceiling. "But *so* false! So utterly, abominably false!"

"Child! What are you saying?" cried Mrs. Sheridan. She really was taken aback by this. "It can't be true. Richard—of all people! How? When? With whom?"

Instead of replying Cassandra ran back to her mother and, half-shutting her eyes, smiling like an actress, she declaimed in low passionate tones: "Dearest, you love me—*still*? Ah, my dear one," pleaded Cassandra, flinging out her hand to her astonished mother. "Don't forget to end each of our daily letters with 'Yes, I love you still' as well as 'Bless you', and don't forget"—here Cassandra raised her hand—"do listen to this bit, Mother," she implored—as though her mother

Peace of Mind

was not listening—"that though I bask, I gloat in the fact that I so perfectly understand your silence, I have a jigsaw of longing to hear you speak. . . ."

After this extraordinary oration Cassandra simply stared at her mother. Mrs. Sheridan really thought the child had become unbalanced.

"But what does it *mean*?" she said. "Did you hear this? Did someone say it to him?"

"No," said Cassandra. She gave a little wave and almost laughed. "I found it—and it's a *mild* specimen, my dear—in his collar-bag!"

December. Peace of mind. What is peace of mind? Did I ever have it? It seems 'Yes', and yet perhaps that is only deception. But at Bandol, for instance, or even at Hampstead? Ah, who knows? The other will not give up his secret. What *is* it? He evades the answer. 'I swear on my honour'. 'Look here, I'm absolutely in the dark'. She cannot believe, and yet she has to believe. The letters *disappear*. All the other letters are left on the table, but not those. Why? I am to forget everything—to behave as though everything has not been. But I can't. Because I don't know what has been, I only know he denies a wrong (not an obvious wrong) which was committed. It must have been committed. People don't write like that *pour rien—de l'amitié pure*. So whenever I look at him and whenever I am with him, there is that *secret*, and I can't give him all I long to give him, nor can I *rest* in him because of it. I have no abiding place. Peace of

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mind. Yes, I had it when I was first here. Yes, I had it fully when I wrote *Miss Brill*.

No, I've been poisoned by these 'letters'. How can he know someone so strange to me? to us? Not only know her, but cherish her?

But the champagne was no good at all. It might have been water. I had to drink it because it was there, but there was something positively malicious in the way the little bubbles hurled themselves to the rim, danced, broke. They seemed to be jeering at me.

I thought, a few minutes ago, that I could have written a whole novel about *a Liar*. A man who was devoted to his wife, but who *lied*. But I couldn't. I couldn't write a whole novel about *anything*. I suppose I shall write stories about it. But at this moment I can't get through to anything. There's something like a great wall of sand between me and the whole of my 'world'. I feel as though I am *dirty* or *disgusted* or both. Everything I think of seems false.

By all the laws of the M. and P.
This book is bound to belong to me.
Besides I am sure that you agree
I am the English Anton T.

(Written in 1917 on the fly-leaf of a
volume of Tchehov's stories belong-
ing to J. M. M.)

God forgive me, Tchehov, for my impertinence.
(December 12, 1920.)

Longing. Madame Lavena.

He kissed and kissed the dark sweet-smelling hand with the silver ring.

Pa—pa! Pa-pa!

(December 14, 1920.)

“As soon as you speak of male and female—for instance, of the fact that the female spider, after fertilization, devours the male—his eyes glow with curiosity, his face brightens, and the man revives in fact. All his thoughts, however noble, lofty or neutral they may be, they all have one point of resemblance. You walk along the street with him and meet a donkey, for instance. . . . ‘Tell me, please,’ he asks, ‘what would happen if you mated a donkey with a camel?’ And his dreams! Has he told you of his dreams? It is magnificent! First, he dreams that he is married to the moon, then that he is summoned before the police and ordered to live with a guitar. . . .” (Laevsky: in Tchegov’s *The Duel*.)

Oh darling Tchegov! I was in misery to-night—ill, unhappy, despondent, and you made me laugh . . . and forget, my precious friend!

(December 16, 1920.)

1921

The New Year.

The last day of the old year was dull and cold. All day the light was weak and pale and smoky, like the light of a lamp when the oil is all but finished and the wick begins to burn. Everything looked shabby, even the trees—even the sky with its big grey patches. The church bells seemed never to stop ringing. The trams groaned, dragged past as if they expected every journey to be the last, and when there was no other sound, a little dog, tied up somewhere, began to yelp as young dogs do when they are frightened.

New Year. When she reached home the New Year was there already, pale, mysterious, gentle and so timid. It lay in the folds of the curtains, in the shadows of the stairs—it waited for her on the landing. She undressed quickly, making as little noise as possible and quickly she plaited her hair. But as she parted the sheets it seemed to her that a single hand—the hand of the New Year—drew them down too, and after she was in bed, that gentle hand helped to cover her.

Sophie Bean.

What was there about that little house at the corner which made you feel sure a widow lived

there? In the tiny sloping garden there grew candy-tuft, mignonette, pansies, Star of Bethlehem. A narrow asphalt path led to the door. But there was something about the windows—something quenched, expressionless. They had nothing to hide, nothing to reveal; and there was something about the bell that made you know when you rang it that the door would not be answered at once. There would be an interval of strange, dead quiet, and then there would come a faint rustling.

Sophie Bean sat at the dining-room window in her black dress, hemming pillow-slips. She was pale, but in the dusky room a whiteness came from the pillow-slips, like the whiteness of snow, and made her paler. Her hands moved slowly—something depressed her—but it had to be done. Nevertheless she very often put it down and looked out of the window at the drooping trees, the heavy trams chuffing along, and the people who passed by, stooping and hurrying as though there was a secret reason why they should not be seen.

The Cat.

To-day, passing the kitchen, the door was open. Charles sat up to the table darning socks. And there sat beside the ball of wool a large black cat with an old bow round its neck. When he took up the scissors, the cat squeezed up its eyes as if to say "That's quite right", and when he put

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the scissors down it just put out its paw as if to straighten them, but then it drew its paw back, deciding that it wasn't worth it.

Keats' Letters to Fanny Brawne.

"When I have been, or supposed myself in health . . ."

"How astonishingly (here I must premise that illness, as far as I can judge in so short a time, has relieved my mind of a load of deceptive thoughts and images, and makes me perceive things in a truer light),—how astonishingly does the chance of leaving the world impress a sense of its natural beauties upon us! Like poor Falstaff, though I do not 'babble', I think of green fields; I muse with the greatest affection on every flower I have known since my infancy—their shapes and colours are as new to me as if I had just created them with a superhuman fancy. It is because they are connected with the most thoughtless and the happiest moments of our lives. I have seen foreign flowers in hot-houses, of the most beautiful nature, but I do not care a straw for them. The simple flowers of our Spring are what I want to see again." (*February 16, 1820.*)

"Well, may you exclaim, how selfish to wish me to be unhappy. You must be so if you love me. Upon my soul, I can be contented with

Keats and Fanny Brawne

nothing else. If you would really what is call'd enjoy yourself at a Party—if you can smile in people's faces, and wish them to admire you *now*—you never have, nor ever will love me . . . I wish you seriously to look over my letters kind and unkind and consider whether the Person who wrote them can be able to endure much longer the agonies and uncertainties which you are so peculiarly made to create.” (*May, 1820.*)

“They talk of my going to Italy. 'Tis certain I shall never recover if I am to be so long separate from you.” (*July 5, 1820.*)

Oh, hear it!

January 14. “To be happy with you seems such an impossibility! it requires a luckier Star than mine! it will never be.” (*August, 1820.*)

“Nothing is so bad as want of health—it makes one envy scavengers and cinder-sifters.” (*August 23, 1820.*)

These letters written during his fatal illness are terrible to one in my situation. It is frightening that he too should have known this mental anguish. And to read his letter to Fanny on page 180 [i.e. that of July 5, 1820]—nay worse, that in which he says she has no *right* to that kind of happiness if she loves him . . . “If you can smile in people's faces, and wish them to admire you

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now . . ." My God, does another soul on earth understand his torment as I do? That kind of thing—which she couldn't see was impossible . . . What would he have said and *felt* at B's letters? He would have felt what I felt. Let no man suffer so again! For mingled with all the known suffering is the anguish of despair because *one is ill*. How could anyone let such a thing happen to me at such a time? Or is it my 'fate' because I am ill? Do they treat me as posthumous already? Oh, the agony of life! How does one endure it? Oh, I have suffered too greatly. Nothing can take it away but one thing, and that I am—I feel in my soul—to be denied.

(*January, 1921.*)

Sunday, January 2. This afternoon is dreary, it is going dark, but I am waiting for somebody. Somebody will come in and not go again. He will stay to supper, sleep here and be here when I wake in the morning.

January 8. I would like to hear J. saying 'We'll have the north meadow mowed tomorrow', on a late evening in summer, when our shadows were like a pair of scissors, and we could just see the rabbits in the dark.

January 18.

There was a Mrs. Bristowe
Whose other name was Susan;
She had a badly twist toe
And couldn't get her shoes on.

Station Climatérique

January 30. J. accused me of always bagging his books as soon as he had begun to read them. I said: 'It's like fishing. I see you've got a bite. I want your line. I want to pull it in.'

May 19.

"Lone women like to empty houses perish."

(Marlowe: *Hero and Leander*.)

"Far from the town (where all is *whist and still*,
Save that the sea playing on yellow sand,
Sends forth a *ratling* murmur to the land)
My turret stands."

(Marlowe: *Hero and Leander*.)

Lovely!

Station Climatérique.

"One tries still to fancy that one is here by some chance of travel, to flavour the experience with some lingering taste of adventure. One tries to fancy one is a little different from the others. *They* belong to the place; they are part of it; they are an essential part of the intense impression it conveys; they could not really belong anywhere else! But oneself. . . ." (R. O. Prowse: *A Gift of the Dusk*.)

"How much the knowledge that one is alive for other people helps one to feel alive oneself!"

"That constant taking of leave which has haunted my secret thought."

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War and Peace.

“‘Ho, ho, ho! ha ha! ha ha! Oh! oo!’ the soldiers burst into a roar of such hearty, good-humoured laughter, in which the French line too could not keep from joining, that after it seemed as though they must unload their guns, blow up their ammunition, and all hurry away back to their homes. But the guns remained loaded, the port-holes in the houses and earth-works looked out as menacingly as ever, and the cannons, taken off their platforms, confronted one another as before.”

This is *great art*—this book. This is the real thing. It is a whole created world.

The Little Princess in labour. “The most solemn mystery in the world was being accomplished.”

Compare this beautiful gravity of feeling with our modern ‘birth’ scene. It’s not what *I* am suffering—it’s the ‘mystery’.

The Thaw. “It looked as though the sky were melting, and without the slightest wind sinking down upon the earth. The only movement in the air was the soft downward motion of microscopic drops of moisture or mist. The bare twigs in the garden were hung with transparent drops which dripped on to the freshly fallen leaves. *The earth in the kitchen garden had a gleaming, wet, black look*

like the centre of a poppy, and at a short distance away it melted off into the damp, dim veil of fog."

"Life is everything. Life is God. All is changing and moving, and that motion is God. And while there is life there is the joy of the consciousness of the Godhead. To love life is to love God. The hardest and the most blessed thing is to love this life in one's sufferings, in undeserved suffering."

"A spiritual wound that comes from a rending of the spirit is like a physical wound, and after it has healed externally, and the torn edges are scarred over, yet, strange to say, like a deep physical injury it only heals inwardly by the force of life pushing up from within." That is true, master.

"And Pierre had won the Italian's passionate devotion simply by drawing out what was best in his soul and admiring it." That *is* love.

Pierre and Natasha. "When on saying good-bye, he took her thin, delicate hand he unconsciously held it somewhat longer in his own."

This is *just* what I understand, and so is this:—

"A joyful, unexpected frenzy, of which Pierre had believed himself incapable, seized

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upon him. The whole meaning of life, not for him only, but for all the world, seemed to him centred in his love and the possibility of her loving him."

"She only talked because she needed to exercise her lungs and her tongue. She cried like a child, because she needed the physical relief of tears, and so on. What for people in their full vigour is a motive, with her was obviously a pretext."

Like Polonius.

Petya.

"Ah, you want a knife?" he said to an officer, who was trying to tear off a piece of mutton. And he gave him his pocket-knife.

The officer praised the knife.

'Please keep it, I have several like it,' said Petya, blushing.

"Come, again. Strike up, my music. Come! . . ."

My music!

"I'm fond of sweet things. *They are capital raisins, take them all.*"

Petya's death. "And again in the helpless struggle with reality, the mother, refusing to believe that she could live while her adored boy,

just blossoming into life, was dead, took refuge from reality in the world of delirium. . . ."

All this is so true of Chummie . . . that . . .

"For him only that is important to which he, Tolstoi, has set his hand; all that occurs outside and beside him, for him has no existence. This is the great prerogative of great men. And sometimes it seems to me—perhaps it is only that I would have it seem so—as though there were in that prerogative a deep and hidden meaning." (Leon Shestov.)

Snow.

It fell so softly, so gently, it seemed to him that even tenderly it fell. It floated through the air as if it were sorry for something, and wanted to reassure him, to comfort him. Forget! forget! all is blotted out, all is hidden—long ago, said the snow. Nothing can ever bring it back, nothing can ever torture you again. There is no trace left. All is as if it never had been. Your footsteps and hers are long since covered over. If you were to look for her, you never would find her. If she were to come seeking you, it would be in vain. You have your wish, your wish! whispered the snow. You are safe, hidden, at peace—free.

At that moment, upon that word, a clock struck one loud single stroke. It was so loud, so mournful, like a despairing groan, that the feathery

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snowflakes seemed to shiver, to hesitate an instant, only to fall again faster than ever as though something had frightened them.

The Café.

The café was all but deserted. Over in the corner there sat a poor little creature with two loops of velvet in her hat that gave her the look of a rabbit. She was writing a letter. First she wrote a little, and then she looked up, and the two bows of ribbon seemed to pout, to listen. Then she crouched down again and scribbled another sheet. Again she looked up. The foxy waiter had his eye on her. . . .

In another corner sat a stout man with a swollen shabby black leather bag at his feet. He was yawning over a time-table, but occasionally he stopped and gave the black bag a little dig, a kick, as if to warn it that it was no good falling too fast asleep. They'd have to be off soon.

Aah! Baah! aaah! baah! like thousands of tired sheep in the shearing pens at evening-time.

And the gum-leaves, like tufts of cock's feathers ruffled in the faint breeze.

March 26. "A poem should not be something which the maker spins out of himself, but something external which he renders in verse as faithfully as possible. When Tennyson, for instance, wrote

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime,

The Doctor

he did not make it at all. The lime-tree made it; he just saw it." (From an anonymous review.)

Hénorme!

April. Her face was like a marigold that insisted on keeping open too long.

She looked about as big as a cottage-loaf in a pinafore.

I said to Dr. Bouchage, when he wanted to examine my abdomen: "Oh, Doctor! Isn't there anything I can keep to myself?" And he didn't even smile!

It is a curious fact that when a writer has attained to a certain eminence, we English cease to bother ourselves about him. There he is, recognised, accepted, labelled.

Faint the light shines in the little window; it is easily put out.

The Doctor.

"I suppose, Doctor," my patients are fond of saying,—for patients flatter their doctors, you know, just as much as doctors flatter their patients —"the reason why you look always so very stern in your car and never glance to the right or left is—that you know so many people. I mean if once you began to recognise anybody it would be—a—

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a kind of royal procession from door to door. Too dreadfully boring!"

I more than smile, I fling back my head, wrinkle my eyes and give my famous silent little laugh. Then I spring to my feet lightly, almost youthfully, incline towards the patient, take that confiding little hand in mine and say, as I press it reassuringly, "But it needs the most dreadful discipline, you know . . . sometimes. Goodbye!" And I am gone before the patient has done thinking, 'Then he did see me that day—after all, I was right!'

But the patient is wrong, of course. Not that it is a matter of any importance. But what really happens is—I emerge from the hotel, château, villa—whatever it is. The grey car is drawn up to the pavement edge, and the figure of Giovanni leaps to attention on the instant. I cross rapidly, pause one moment, my foot on the step, and not looking at Giovanni, but looking over his shoulder, give him the next address and then leap in, light an Egyptian cigarette, thrust my hands into my pockets, so as to be ready, at the first movement, at the very first gliding motion of the car, to relax, to lean back, to give myself up, to let myself be carried, without a thought, or a feeling, or an emotion. . . .

Oh, Bogey, I can't help laughing at the hymns and prayers at your lecture.¹ Did *you* sing? I

¹ I had given Katherine an account of a lecture at which, to my surprise and embarrassment, prayers were offered and hymns sung; but I had completely forgotten the incident until I found this note in one of K. M.'s notebooks.

The Clinic Garden

feel you'd like (I'd almost swear to it) to be specially mentioned in a prayer. Did you kneel down? And all those rubber *tikis* showed on your shoes? *Signes cabalistiques*. I often used to think what a horror they would have given Robinson Crusoe. Oh, *dear* me! Did you have a hymn-book of your own, or half the parson's?

The Clinic Garden.

Carriages are not allowed to drive up to the doors of the clinique because of the noise. They stop at the big iron gate. Then comes a little walk—on the level, it is true, but still quite a walk before the yellow glass porch is reached. But there is a compensation, if only the patients would realize it. On either side of the gravel are flower-beds full of purple and pink stocks, wallflowers, forget-me-nots and creamy freezias with their spears of tender green like the green of young bamboos. The front of the clinique is hung with heliotrope, banksia roses and pink ivy geranium. And there is such a coming and going of brown bees and white butterflies, the air smells so sweet, there is such a sense of delicate trembling life that, however ill anyone might be, it was impossible surely not to be cheered and distracted. "Look, look how lovely!" said the plain girl, pointing them out to her companion.

But the young man in a black double-breasted jacket put his hands to his ribs and breathed *a-huh-a-huh* as if he were playing trains.

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"How pretty they are—how very pretty!" said the sentimental old mother, wagging her head at them and glancing at her daughter.

But the pale daughter stared back at her spitefully, very spitefully, and flung the end of her shawl over her shoulder.

Now a bath-chair is pushed along, carrying an old man. In his stiff much-too-big overcoat, with his hat squeezed down to his ears, he looks marvellously like a Guy Fawkes.

The nurse stops the chair and says "Flowers!" as one says "Flowers!" to a baby. But there is no response at all; she bridles and wheels it on again. . . .

Stupéfaction totale. I feel unable to do anything. It is a proof of the horribly soporific nature of the codeine mixture.

A little book: *Knockings at the Door*. When she managed to blow the tissue-paper from the frontispiece, the author, with his hair parted down the middle, wearing a buttoned frock-coat and a turned-down collar, smiled at her almost too confidently.

[Katherine left Mentone for Montreux early in May, 1921.]

June. I am in the middle of one of my *Giant Coups*. Yesterday evening I decided to look no longer for doctors in Montreux. In fact I felt the hour had come for something quite extraordinary. So I phoned Montana—asked Dr. Stephani to descend by funiculaire to Sierre and

meet me here at the Château Bellevue at 3 o'clock to-day—then engaged a car and started off this morning shortly after 9 o'clock. It is years since I have done such things; it is like a dream.

Sierre: The room with Seven Doors. Each door is different, and the seventh is a very tiny little door. It opens into a cupboard painted white, with an arched top, sky blue, sprinkled with stars.

The furniture, stern and dark.

Unposted Letters.

It's like this. It's no good my being here [at Sierre] any more. It's too hot and the food has gone off. Also, I must tackle my affair seriously, you know. So I am going to Montana. Stephani says that he would far rather I went to him for a month at least so that he could keep my heart under his eye—or ear. Good. I agree. But there's my Bogey. Will he go to a pension five minutes away for a month and visit me? As soon as I find out how the place suits me we can get a little chalet. I send you a p.c. of your pension, Stephani's place is not a real live-or-dead sanatorium. He, of course, thinks you would like to be with me there. Why not? It is quite usual. But I say *No* to that, and I'm sure you agree. You'd hate it. So would I.

Look here, my love and my dear,

I'm not really up to chalets yet. This is what would be BEST of all. Do you agree? We go to

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Montana. I go to Stephani's for a month at least. You have a room at this Pension du Lac. Stephani can then keep his eye and his ear on me, and I can lie absolutely low for that month. *Then*, in the meantime, we have looked round and we take a chalet. Does that seem possible to you?

By Moonlight. (To W. J. D.)

Dinner was over. There was a whiff of Father's cigar from the hall, and then the door of the smoking-room shut, clicked. Mother went rustling to and fro, to and fro—to the dining-room door, speaking to Zaidee who was clearing away, giving Hans who was helping Zaidee his orders for to-morrow—to the music-room speaking to the girls.

"Francie darling, run upstairs and get me my cream feather boa, will you? My cream one. On the top of the tall wardrobe. Come here, child! How beautifully you have done your hair!"

"Really, dearest? It was simply thrown up. I was in such a hurry. . . ."

"How mysterious it is that if one really *tries* to get that effect. . . ."

"Yes, isn't it?"

There came a soft chain of sound from the music-room, as though Meg had flung a bright loop and snared the dreaming piano.

"We're going to try over Francie's new song," said she. "*This Life is Weary.*"

By Moonlight

"This Life is Weary!" cried Mother. "Oh, dear, is it another tragic one? I can't understand why all these modern songs are so depressing. It seems so unnecessary. Why can't one for a change . . ."

"Oh, but it's fascinating!" said Meg. "Listen!" And softly she played "This Life is We-ary." "You can't say you like *Cupid at the Ferry* better than that?"

"I do," said Mother. "I like songs about primroses and cheerful normal birds and . . . and spring and so on."

But Francie came floating down the stairs with the feather boa.

"It wasn't on the tall wardrobe, you little story," said she, winding her Mother up in it. "It was among your hats. And then you always pretend to be so tidy and unlike us."

"If you don't speak to me with more respect," said Mother, "I shall go straight off and tell your Father. Thank you, darling child!"

Francie's little wooden heels tapped over the parquet floor of the music-room. "Shut the door while we're practising, will you,—please, Mother?"

The door shut and the piano seemed to have been waiting until it was alone with them, it burst out so passionately: "This Life is Weary."

Silence from the hall. Mother was still, her head bent, turning her rings. What was she thinking of? She looked up. The double doors on to the porch were open and the light in the glass lantern flickered faintly. Dreamily she went

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over to the hall-stand and picked something up. "Why," she murmured aloud, "is there always one odd glove? Where does it come from?"

Down the passage, through the green-baize door that led to the kitchen regions, sailed Zaidee with her tray of trembling glass and winking silver and moon-white plates. And Hans followed with the finger-bowls, with the fruit-dishes and the plates piled with curls of tangerine peel and shavings of pineapple-rind.

The last tray was carried; the heavy baize door swung to with a 'woof'. There came a faint ghostly chatter from the kitchen. Very far away it sounded.

Where was Laurie? He had gone straight off to his dark-room after dinner. She wouldn't disturb him—no! But all the same Laura slid off the landing window-sill, parted the embroidered velvet curtains that hid her so beautifully, and coming on to the stairs leaned her arms along the banisters. What was she to do?

"This Life is We-ary!
A Tear—a Sigh!
A Love that Chang-es!"

sang Francie. And suddenly from that far-away kitchen there sounded a shrill little peal of laughter. . . .

How much bigger the house felt at night! thought Laura. All the lighted rooms and the passages that were dark and the cupboards and the front and back stairs. As to the cupboard under the stairs, Laura's eyes widened at the very

By Moonlight

thought of it. . . . She saw herself, suddenly, exploring it with a candle-end. There was the old croquet set, last year's goloshes, the shelf of dead lamps, and the buffalo horns tied up with ribbons. It was like exploring a cave.

Big—big and empty. No, not empty exactly, but awfully strange. For though the lights were up everywhere, through the open windows the darkness came flowing in from outside. It was the darkness that so gently breathed in the curtains, gathered in pools under the tables, and hid in the folds even of the coats down there in the hall. And the stairs! Stairs at night were utterly different to what they were by day, and people went up and down them quite differently. They were much more important, somehow; they might have led to anywhere.

But just as Laura thought that, she had an idea that someone on the top landing was looking down at her. Someone had suddenly appeared from nowhere and with a brilliant round white face was staring! Oh, how awful! And it was shameful, too, to have such ideas at her age. She had decided the face was a Chinaman's before she had time to look up. What nonsense! It was the moon shining through the top landing window. And now there were moonbeam fingers on the banisters. Laura walked up the stairs slowly, but for some reason she tried not to make a sound, and looking down at her satin shoes, she pretended they were little birds tiptoeing up a dark branch.

"But now we're at the top of the tree," she

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told them. And she stood with her head bent and her arms by her sides, waiting for someone. . . .

"It's only because people don't know she's here that they don't come," thought Laura. "She is wearing a white tulle dress with a black velvet sash—very nice! Charming! I say, Laurie, introduce me to your sister!" And someone came forward, stroking his white kid gloves.

Laura was so delighted she gave a little jump for joy, and forgetting all about her resolve, she ran across the landing, down the passage, past the American bathroom and knocked at the dark-room door. . . .

This isn't bad, but at the same time it's not good. It's too easy. I wish I could go back to N.Z. for a year. But I can't possibly just now. I don't see why not in two years' time, though.

(June-July.)

The Problem.

"Do you think that marriage would be of any use to me?"

His friend considered gravely. He frowned, knocked his pipe against his heel, and thrust out his underlip. "It depends," said he, "very much on the woman."

"Oh, but of course," said Archie eagerly.

"Granted the right woman," said Rupert

The Vagabond

largely, "I can imagine it might immensely benefit you."

The problem is two friends, and a woman enters. One marries.¹

September. It's nothing short of loathsome to be in my state. Two weeks ago I could write anything. I went at my work each day and at the end of each day so much was written. Whereas *now* I can't say a word!

The Vagabond.

"The woman from upstairs has just been down to put her milk-can out. She was furious when she found me in the hall. She simply rounded on me; there's no other word for it. Told me I ought to be ashamed of myself for waiting up for him, that it served me right if he came in later and later, that she'd be ashamed, at my age, not to know better. Little spitfire! I'm still trembling! And what right has she to say anything at all? She has none. She can't understand. She's a hard little thing! The very way she shut the door on the milk-can just now showed she had no feeling for anyone else.

It's a long time now since he started going out every evening. I can't stop him. I've tried everything, but it is useless. Out he goes. And the horrible thing is I don't know where it is he

¹ This is, I think, the first 'idea' of the unfinished story *Honesty*, of which fragments have been published in *The Doves' Nest*.

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goes to and who is he with? It's all such a mystery. That's what makes it so hard to bear. Where have you been? I've asked him and asked him that. But never a word, never a sign. I sometimes think he likes to torture me.

But then I've got nobody else. I suppose that sounds strange. But I can say as truly as a girl in love: 'He is all the world to me'."

*Autobiography.*¹

My literary career began with short-story writing in New Zealand. I was nine years old when my first attempt was published. I have been filling notebooks ever since. After I came to London I worked for some time for *The New Age*, and published *In A German Pension* in 1912. It was a bad book, but the press was kind to it. Later, I worked with my present husband, Mr. John Middleton Murry, editor of *The Athenæum*, but at that time editor of *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review*. In the past two years I have reviewed novels for *The Athenæum*, and I have written more short stories. Such a prolonged exercise ought to have produced something a great deal better than *Bliss*; I hope the book on which I am now engaged will be more worthy of the interest of the public. It is a collection of stories—one with a New Zealand setting in the style of 'Prelude'. Several are character sketches of

¹ Written, I think, in answer to a request from a literary magazine, but probably neither sent nor published.

Harden your Heart

women rather like poor Miss Ada Moss in the story 'Pictures.'

Harden your Heart.

Claire replied most enthusiastically.

"My dear, how extraordinary that we should be unbeknown within reach of each other after all this time! I shall love to come to tea on Sunday. It's ages since I've had a real talk with a fellow-creature. I am lunching with a Mr. Beaver at the *Royal* and shall come on from there by tram. My carriage days are over! Lucky you, to have managed to snare a small villa. As soon as I can get the present people out I am moving into a minute one myself. I loathe hotels, and as to pensions . . . !

Until Sunday *alors*. Lovingly

CLAIRE.

P.S.—Hannah C. told me your news. Ought I to be sorry? I am, because you must have suffered. Otherwise I can't help being wickedly glad that another of them has been found out!"

Isobel read the letter over twice. It was curious how important letters became when you lived by yourself. They seemed to be somehow much more than written words on a page. They breathed, they spoke, they brought the person before you. And—was it fancy?—Isobel heard a sharp note in Claire's gay childlike voice, and

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a something careless—not careless exactly, reckless was more the word—that was quite new. And yet, after all, perhaps it was just her imagination. One dashed down a little note like that in some hotel writing-room with people asking for a loan of your blotting-paper or whether there was such a thing as an uncrossed nib in your pen-tray. But what could it be?

“It’s so charming; it’s like a portrait: ‘Hat with a Feather’.”

Claire turned pink with pleasure. She smiled a little special smile to suit the hat.

“Really? I’m so glad you like it. I got it in,—of all places, my dear—Monaco. But I was motoring through one day with the David Shetlings and suddenly: There it was! You know how one *recognizes* a hat,—so strange, isn’t it? So I stopped the car, pinned it on and took my old one away in a paper bag.”

“But I was thinking only the other night in bed, love is really absolute torment for anybody. One is never at peace, one is always thinking about the person, worrying over them, or being worried over, which is just as bad. Whereas now I have time for myself. I haven’t the constant feeling of a man in the background. Not that one doesn’t like a man in the background now and again,” said Claire, laughing and pulling at her fur. “But not seriously. Just a little affair to keep one keen on one’s appearance. Otherwise one is apt to get grumpy and eccentric.”

Harden your Heart

"But I can see, my dear," said Claire, and she put her arms round Isobel and gave her a quick strained hug, "you're not out of the wood yet. You're still in danger. Oh, yes!" She slipped away from Isobel and pulled on her white suede gloves with quick little twitching tugs, looking down at her hands. Then she looked up, her eyes dead and cold, though her lips smiled. "You've got to harden your heart, my dear," said Claire. "That's the whole secret. Harden your heart! Keep it *hard*."

Isobel said something—it might have been anything—and went with Claire to the door. The day was over, the air blew cold, and under the light sound of Claire's footsteps ringing on the gravel path to the road she heard the long slow pull of the cold sea.

(July 23, 1921.)

August. "Do you want to go home, want to go home, want to go home?" said she. Why she asked it so many times nobody will ever know.

The first year their mother had a flat in London for the season Betty and Susannah met more people who were not relations in a fortnight than they had seen in the whole of their lives. Not that they were very old. Betty wore stockings in the winter, bathed herself and used a small knife to cut up her own meat, but Susannah was still small enough to sit on knees, to believe everything people said and to drink out of her christening mug.

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"The smell of thyme shattered the silence as the scream of a hawk" . . .

"The hot smell between her teeth . . . as she lay there damp and shivering!"

It is impossible to 'take in' all these views and changes of light. The innocent girl who barely knew the word 'obscene' could not think in this fashion: "Was it merely as a potentiality that he obsessed her thoughts?"

Emily Plack.

The *panting* of the saw.

"I was in the first stage of consumption, and was suffering from something else, possibly even more serious than consumption. . . . I was, day by day, more possessed by a passionate, irritating longing for ordinary everyday life. I yearned for mental tranquillity, health, fresh air, good food. *I was becoming a dreamer*, and like a dreamer, I did not know exactly what I wanted." (Tchegov: *An Anonymous Story*.)

Silence. Little children run in and out of this world, never knowing the danger; and sick persons feel it slowly building up about them, trying to thrust its way into the place of the other. That is why they have such a horror of being alone . . . anything to break the silence; and lonely people, rather than face it, walk the streets, gape at shows, drink.

The Little Colt

Why did she put his chair in the window always? Sun or no sun, she stuck him in the window as if he had been a canary!

(*September.*)

October. The deep grudge that she has for me really is fascinating. She keeps it under for a long time at a stretch, but oh!—how it is there! To-night, for instance, in the salon we hated each other—really hated in a queer way. I felt I wanted her out of my sight; she felt that she must insult me before she went. It was very queer. It was peculiarly horrible. When she said, "I hope you are satisfied," I had a real shrinking from her—something I never feel at other times. What is it? I don't understand, either, why her carelessness and recklessness should be so repellent to me. When she tosses her head and says in a strange voice, "Oh, a lot I care!" I want to be rid of the very sight.

"That's how it is, old girl. . . . Kuzma Ionitch is gone . . . He said goodbye to me . . . He went and died for no reason . . . Now, suppose you had a little colt, and you were own mother to that little colt . . . And all at once that same little colt went and died . . . You'd be sorry, wouldn't you?"

The little mare munches, listens, and breathes on her master's hands. Iona is carried away and tells her all about it."
(Tchehov: *Misery.*)

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I would see every single French short story up the chimney for this. It's one of the masterpieces of the world.

N.Z. *Honesty*: The Doctor and his wife, Arnold Cullen, Lydia, and Archie.

L. *One Kiss*: Arnold Alexander and his friend in the train. *Wet lilac*.

N.Z. *Six Years After*: The wife and husband on the steamer. The cold buttons.

N.Z. *Aunt Anne*: Her life with the Tannhäuser overture.

L. *Lives like Logs of Driftwood*.

N.Z. *A Weak Heart*: Edie and Ronnie.

L. *Widowed*: Geraldine and Jimmie.

N.Z. *Our Maude*: "What a girl you are!"

The Washerwoman's Children.

[This is evidently the first form of the list of stories given in the introduction to *The Doves' Nest*, and the following sentences belong to the first conception of *One Kiss*, which became *Second Violin*, but was never finished. They are interesting as an example of Katherine's later method of composition. But it must be remembered that only one of these stories was finished, namely, *The Washerwoman's Children*, which finally became the masterpiece, *The Doll's House*. It is notable that this was added apparently as an afterthought to the list given above; it subsequently appears, with the title *At Karori*, in the fuller list dated October 27, 1921:—

N.Z. *At Karori*: The little lamp. I seen it. And

then they were silent. Three days later the entry is completed with: *Finito*, 30. x. 21.

This suggests that in fact Katherine's inspirations were much more sudden and unexpected than she herself realized, and that she had to capture them quickly or they would escape her. Anyhow, the fact is remarkable that of nearly all her completed stories nothing but the stories themselves remain. Of these stories there are, generally, no notes, no alternative drafts, no 'false starts,' but only an original manuscript written at ever-increasing speed so that the writing towards the end is hardly more than a hieroglyph. In some cases there is a fair copy, with singularly little alteration.]

One Kiss.

And the friend opposite gazed at him thinking what an attractive mysterious fellow he was. And the train sped on. . . .

Flashy and mean. . . .

It was spouting with rain. Yet there was that feeling of spring in the air which makes everything bearable

The big sprays of flowers

He shot out his legs, flung up his arms, stretched, then sat up with a jerk and felt in his pocket for the yellow packet of cigarettes. As he felt for them a weak strange little smile played on his lips. His friend opposite was watching it. He knew it. Suddenly he raised his head; he looked his friend full in the eyes.

"That was a queer thing to happen," he said softly and meaningly.

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"What?" asked the friend, curious.

Alexander kept him waiting for the answer. Practised liar that he was, the . . .

[The above appear to have been notes of the original 'idea' of the story. On another page, a beginning is made with the writing.]

It happened that Alexander and his friend missed the Sunday morning train that all the company travelled by. The only other for them to catch so as to be at their destination in time for the rehearsal on Monday morning was one that left London at midnight. The devil of a time! And the devil of a train, too. It stopped at every station. "Must have been carrying the London milk into the country," said Alexander bitterly. And his friend who thought that there was no one like him said, "That's good, that is. Extremely good! You could get a laugh for that on the halls, I should say."

They spent the evening with their landlady in her kitchen. She was fond of Alexander; she thought him quite the gentleman.

[In *The Doves' Nest*, p. 174, will be found an entirely new beginning of the story: "'I've a run of three twice, ducky,' said Ma."]

The Skerritt Girl.

On her way back to the garden Susannah sat down on the hall chair for a minute to take a

The Skerritt Girl

pebble out of her shoe. And she heard her mother say: "No, I can't possibly do that. I can't possibly turn that dear good Mr. Taylor out of the house simply to make room for this Skerritt girl."

It was a little difficult to explain the facts of the case to the Reverend Mr. Taylor, and Mrs. Downing hated having to do so. It seemed so unreasonable to ask him to turn out of the spare-room for the night for an unknown girl, when he was their regular guest, as it were, for the whole Synod, and so appreciative—poor lonely up-country man—of the spare-room double-bed. But there was nothing else to be done. In that extraordinary way men have, Harry, Mrs. Downing's husband, had rung up from the office to tell her that a Netta Skerritt had called on him that morning as she was passing through Wellington on her way to Nelson, and though neither of the Downings had even seen her before, simply because her father and Harry Downing had known each other in the old days, Harry had immediately asked her to stay the night with them.

At that moment Susannah herself came in from the garden. She leaned her elbow on the round walnut table, crossed her legs, and cupped her burning cheeks in her hands.

"And you really won't mind Susannah's bed for the night, Mr. Taylor?" said Mrs. Downing anxiously, pouring him out a second cup of tea.

"Not at all, Mrs. Downing. I shall be as

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happy as a king," said good cheerful Mr. Taylor.

But Susannah's eyes opened very wide. Her lips parted, she stared first at her mother, and then at Mr. Taylor's black coat, gleaming collar, and big yellow hands.

"Is Mr. Taylor going to sleep in my bed, Mother?" said she, astounded.

"Yes, dear, but only for to-night," said her mother, absently folding a piece of bread-and-butter. Mr. Taylor smiled his broad smile.

Susannah imagined him lying in her bed, his head tilted back, snoring like he snored on Sunday afternoons. How awful!

"With *me*?" she asked, horrified.

Mother flushed faintly, and Mr. Taylor gave a loud snort that might have been laughter.

"Don't be such a silly little girl, Susannah. Of course not. You are going to sleep in the spare room with Miss Skerritt."

This was more mysterious still. Oh dear, why were grown-ups like this? She had only run in for a piece of bread-and-butter; she wanted to get back to the garden. And here they were sitting in this dark room. It looked very dark, and the white cups shone on the walnut table like lilies in a lake, after the bright outside.

A moment later and there was nothing left of Netta Skerritt but a dint in the pillow and one long—much too long—blue-black hairpin gleaming on the pale carpet.

Lucien.

Lucien's mother was a dressmaker. They lived in the village with the big church down in the valley. It was a very big church, it was enormous; it had two towers like horns. . . . On misty days, when you climbed the hill and looked down and you heard the great bell jangle, it reminded you of a large pale cow. Lucien was nine years old. He was not like other boys. For one thing he had no father, and for another he did not go to school, but stayed at home all day with his mother. He was delicate. When he was very small his head had gone so soft, so soft, like a jelly, that his mother had had to clap two boards to it to prevent it from shaking. It was quite hard now, but the shape was a little bit queer, and his hair was fine, like down rather than real hair. But he was a good child, gentle, quiet, giving no trouble, and handy with his needle as a girl of twelve. The customers did not mind him. The big, blousy peasant women who came to his mother's room to try on, unhooked their bodices and stood in their stays, scratching their red arms and shouting at his mother, without so much as a glance at him. And he could be trusted to go shopping. (With what a sigh his mother rummaged in the folds of her petticoat, brought out her shabby purse with a clasp, and counted and thumbed the coins before she dropped them into his claw!) He could be trusted to leave at the right houses large bulky newspaper parcels held together with long rusty

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pins. On these excursions Lucien talked to nobody and seldom stopped to look. He trotted along like a little cat out-of-doors, keeping close to the fences, darting into the shop and out again, and only revealing himself fully when he had to stand tiptoe on the top step of the house and reach up for the high knocker. This moment was terrifying to him. . . .

The Sisters.

Just as they reached the gate, Agnes turned back.

"Where are you going to now, my dear?" said Gertrude quickly.

"The sun's so boiling, I must have my parasol."

"Oh, well, bring mine too, will you?" And Gertrude waited. In her pink dress, with one hand on the half-open gate, she felt like a picture. But, unfortunately, there was no one to see except the florid butcher spanking past in his yellow cart. Well, even a butcher is somebody, she thought, as Agnes came running back over the small blue gravel.

"Thanks! It is boiling. I had no idea."

"Roasting— isn't it?" said dark Agnes.

And, putting up their parasols, off they sailed down the Avenue, on the way to the Misses Phipps to try on their new evening dresses. There they go, thought Gertrude, and there they go, thought Agnes,—the daughters of rich parents, young and attractive, one fair, one dark, one a

The Sisters

soprano, one a contralto, with all the really thrilling things in life still to happen to them. And just then Major Trapp on his big chestnut horse turned into the Avenue, and dashing past saluted them; and they both bowed, charmingly, graciously like swans.

"He's out very early," said Gertrude.

"Very!" came from Agnes.

"I've not got my hat too far forward, have I?" asked Gertrude anxiously.

"I don't think so," answered wicked Agnes.

By great good fortune the tram was empty. The sisters had it all to themselves. Feeling grand, down they sat in one of the small wooden pens. The conductor blew his whistle, the driver banged his bell, the fat small horses started forward and away they swung. Merrily danced the pink bobbles on the fringes of the cotton blinds, and gaily the sunlight raced under the arched roof.

"But what on earth am I to do with this?" cried Gertrude, gazing with exaggerated scorn and horror at the bouquet which old Mr. Phipps had cut and bound together so lovingly.

Agnes screwed up her eyes and smiled at the unearthly white and gold arum lily and the dove-blue columbines. "I don't know," said she. "You can't possibly cart it about with you. It's like a barmaid's wedding bouquet." And she laughed and put her hand to her glorious coil of thick hair.

Gertrude tossed it on to the floor, and kicked it under the seat. Just in time, as it happened.

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Vaihinger: *Die Philosophie des Als Ob*. How comes it about that with curiously false ideas we yet reach conclusions that are in harmony with Nature and appeal to us as Truth?

It is by means of, and not in spite of, these logically defective conceptions that we obtain logically valuable results. The fiction of *Force*: when two processes tend to follow each other, to call the property of the first to be followed by the other its "force", and to measure that "force" by the magnitude of the result (*e.g.* force of character). In reality we have only succession and co-existence, and the "force" is something we imagine.

Dogma: absolute and unquestionable truth.

Hypothesis: possible truth (Darwin's doctrine of descent).

Fiction: is impossible but enables us to reach what is relatively truth.

The myths of Plato have passed through these three stages, and passed back again, i.e. they are now regarded as fiction.

Why must thinking and existing be ever on two different planes? Why will the attempt of Hegel to transform subjective processes into objective world-processes not work out? "It is the special art and object of thinking to attain existence by quite other methods than that of existence itself." That is to say, reality cannot become the ideal, the dream; and it is not the

The Artist's Vision

business of the artist to grind an axe, to try to impose his vision of life upon the existing world. Art is not an attempt of the artist to reconcile existence with his vision; it is an attempt to create his own world *in* this world. That which suggests the subject to the artist is the *unlikeness* to what we accept as reality. We single out—we bring into the light—we put up higher.

1922

The Little Frog.

“Presently in the scale of complexity we find a higher power in charge which coordinates the activity of a mass of cells, moving one and stopping another for ‘reasons’ beyond the cognizance of the individual cells. A very extraordinary demonstration of such higher control can be made in the case of the frog. If part of the brain of a frog be removed he goes on living, but has become an automaton. Placed on a level board he sits there until he dries up. But if the board is gradually lifted, so that his position becomes unstable, he walks up the board and at length sits on the end, climbing down the other side if the lifting is continued beyond the vertical.” (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

Poor little frog! He breaks my heart.

Climbing down.

“We live, so far as it is possible for us to do, in the isolated world of ‘conscious mind’ and the associated phenomenal world of sight. A blinded man *changes* his world, a deafened man

Psycho-Analysis

only loses a few trifles in the one he knows. It is useless for a man to hope for any mystic expansion of consciousness till he can use such as is at present potentially in his reach. In fact the real expansion of consciousness is this taking up of possessions within our reach. We have in evolution 'climbed up' our spinal cord (as physiology shows) and sit in our head and look on the outside of everything; we have now to climb down again and learn to see all the numerous insides as well." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

Psycho-Analysis.

"It appears that the true function of psycho-analysis is to change faith to understanding through the medium of analysis whereby we reach knowledge. But it is more than questionable whether this is what many psycho-analysts are doing. For there is the other road, very similar in appearance, by which the fusion of faith and belief results in intellect and where the birth is into the lower instead of into the higher worlds."

"It is true that the days of considering thought to be a secretion of the brain, as bile is of the liver, are past (partly, no doubt, because were this so the calorimeter would show it!); but the latest of the sciences, namely, psycho-analysis, seems to have returned perilously near to this position." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

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Dream Personalities.

"I have long recognised some of the 'people' met in dreams as personifications of the different 'personalities' in 'myself', as is accepted by psycho-analysis. But there are other 'people' to whom this does not apply, unless we are prepared entirely to change the meaning which we give to 'personalities', 'myself', and all such words." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

Sexual Preoccupation.

"It is quite beyond question that the sexual preoccupation of the present day is utterly bad, and whether it be in the way of gratification or repression holds the mind fixed in a most undesirable attitude. . . . So long as men and women are unable to think of anything but sexual gratification when within sight of one of the other sex, the condition is obviously deplorable." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

W.R. is a mixture of W. L. George, Disraeli and Mrs. Henry Dudeney.

January 28. *The Nation* and *Athenæum* came. I have a deep suspicion of B. He is horrid, and I feel he is going to attack me. It's a prophetic feeling. There was an article on psycho-analysis so absurd, ugly and ridiculous that it's difficult to understand how any editor could have let it

The Prison of the Flesh

pass. J. read me his review of Orage; it seemed to me brilliant. He has improved out of all knowledge. I don't think he has any idea how he has found himself lately. All sounds so easy—so to flow off his pen, and that hard dogmatic style has quite gone. He is a real *critic*.

Denn jeder sieht und stellt die Sachen anders,
eben nach seiner Weise.

(1) To escape from the prison of the flesh—of matter. To make the body an instrument, a servant.

(2) To act and not to dream. *To write it down* at all times and at all costs.

What is the universal mind?

Kratu smara Kritani smara Kratu smara Krit-anismar. (From the Isha Upanishad.)

February 7. My mind is not *controlled*. I idle, I give way, I sink into despair. And though I have 'given up' the idea of true marriage now (by the way, what an example is this of the nonsense of time. One week ago we never were nearer. A few days ago we were fast. And now I feel I have been away from J. for months. It's true I cannot bear to think about the things I love in him . . . little things. But if one gives them up they will fade) I am not complete as I must be.

February 8. A day passed in the usual violent agitation, such as J. only can fling me into. Now,

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he will come. There's no stopping him. But it's put down to my wanting him. He is absolutely entangled in himself, as usual. First, my novel wouldn't, then it would. Never was such a (coin a word) *shell*-fish! I hate this in him. It's low to put it all down to me, too. And when he chooses to find tears, he'll find them. There wasn't a suspicion of a tear. In fact, this whole possible devastating affair which nearly kills me—revolts me too. His very frankness is a falsity. In fact it seems falser than his insincerity. I've often noticed that. Went to that flat with the "girls and Uncle". The view outside. Showing off the bedroom. "Voilà la CHAMBRE!"

February 9. Have got a bad chill. . . . L. M. has been noble about this looking for flats, for she is worn out, and she absolutely does not complain once. Just goes and does it all. I have fever and feel as though I've got a very bad attack of chill coming on. Nothing makes me ill like this business with J. It just *destroys* me. . . .

February 10. J. arrived early in the morning, with a letter for me *never to be forgotten*. In half an hour it seemed he had been here a long time.

The New Baby.

At half-past ten the yacht steamed into the Sound, slowed down. . . . "Hullo!" said someone. "We've stopped." For a moment, and it seemed

The New Baby

like a long moment, everybody was silent. They heard the crying of the little waves from the distant beach, the soft moist breath of the large wind came flowing gently over the dark sea. And, looking up at the sky, one fancied that those merrily burning stars were telling one another that the yacht had anchored for the night.

Then, "Come on, girls!" cried the genial old Mayor. And Gertrude Pratt began to bang out *The Honeysuckle and the Bee* on the squat tiny little piano. As the whole party had sung the same song every night for the past three weeks, the noise was considerable, but very pleasant. It was an extraordinary relief after the long dazzling day to lie on deck and put all one's heart into

I love you dearly, dearly and I
Want you to love me. . . .

You couldn't say these things. And yet you felt them. At least—the ladies did. Not for anybody in particular but for everybody, for the lamp even, hanging from the deck-awning, for Tanner the steward's hand as it stroked the guitar. Love! Love! there was no escaping it. It was all very well to pretend to be interested in other things, to look through the glasses, to ask the Captain intelligent questions as you stood on the bridge, to admire Mrs. Strutt's marvellous embroidery. . . .

There were exquisite small shells to be found on these beaches, a small greeny-blue kind, coral spirals, and tiny yellow ones like grains of maize.

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They asked them questions, had a good look at everything, ate the fruit, or whatever they were offered, and took photographs. If there was a swing—and there was usually an old-fashioned one, hanging from a branch in the orchard—the girls got the men to push them, and they flew, their gossamer veils streaming, while the Mayor sat out on the verandah talking to their host, and the older ladies had a quiet chat somewhere within doors.

“We . . . my wife, that is . . .” But it would not do. He began to smile and it seemed he could not smile . . . simple . . . childish . . . yes. “As a matter of fact our first kid turned up this morning at half-past three. A fine boy.”

The Mayor stopped and dug his umbrella into the sand. He didn't quite grasp it for the moment. “You mean—was born?” said he.

“That's it,” said the other, nodding.

“Great Scott!” said the mayor, and he turned back and called his wife. “Mother! they've got a new baby!”

The flowers in the garden *look like it*. So do the little wet shells on the beach. So does the house. All seems to breathe freshness, peace. I especially see those shells—so naive-looking.

“Take them!” he said gently, and bending down he ruffled the leaves and began to gather the fruit.

“Stop! Stop!” she said, shocked. “You're cutting them all. You'll have none on the bush.”

Artistic Experience

"Why not?" he said simply. "You're welcome!"

And they came away thinking "What a life!" All very well to land there for an hour or two on a glorious morning, but imagine being stuck there, month in—year in, year out—with nothing to look at but the sea, with for one's greatest excitement—getting fresh ferns for the fireplace! "Christ! what a life!" thought the men, pacing up and down the deck waiting for the lunch-bell, and "My dear, just imagine it!" thought the ladies, powdering their noses in the flat cabin mirrors. And lunch in the bright saloon, with the port-holes open and the stewards flying to and fro in their linen jackets, always seemed particularly good afterwards.

(February 26, 1922.)

Artistic Experience.

"It is automatic knowledge we want, not intellectual. . . . We should few of us have our eyes intact if we left them to our intellect to guard. When man opens his 'consciousness', not his 'thinking consciousness', to the direct contacts he will not need to 'think' what he wants to do, he will follow naturally the push or flow of cosmos. He will have become automatic in the way in which a gyroscope is automatic, and will tend naturally to those 'points' in cosmos where the burden is heaviest and the experience most full, as our bodies do." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

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Death as Deluge.

"The happening is clearly understandable if we remember, to begin with, that the earthly body is only the shell—the clay with which the framework of the real 'body' is coated. The little flood in the man's own little cosmos begins to rise; he flies to the mountains, taking with him his household goods, but leaving his house behind him, which, bereft of his care, crumbles and is a lodging for worms. The flood follows; on he climbs, throwing away his possessions, till at last, almost naked, he reaches a place of safety, where he stays till the little deluge is over. When the waters retire he comes down, gathers together such of his goods as he can find, builds a new home, and starts life again in the 'state into which it has pleased God to call him'." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

Images of Truth.

"The craze for phallicism is as tiresome as Sun Myths and Golden Boughs. They are all true in their own octave, and foolish when transferred to the wrong octave. But there is no escape from this so long as man thinks himself to be only a bifid radish. All our condescension in permitting to the ancients the use of poetic licence is entirely misplaced. All the things which a poet describes if he is a *real* poet, are quite as real as brick walls and railway trains." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

Analogy.

"Analogy is one of the most valuable instruments that we have. By well-chosen analogy we can make shift to think on matters which are beyond our grasp until such time as we can throw the analogy aside, having replaced it by some mind-form special to the matter. Each time that we do this we have made a step towards the evolution of reality." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

An unposted letter.

I feel as though I have become embedded in this hotel. The weeks pass and we do less and less, and seem to have no time for anything. Up and down in the lift, along the corridors, in and out of the restaurant—it's a whole, complete life. One has a name for everybody; one is furious if someone has taken 'our table', and the little gritty breakfast-trays whisk in and out unnoticed, and it seems quite natural to carry about that heavy key with the stamped brass disk 134. I am 134, and Murry is 135.

Oh, dear—I have so much to tell you, so much I would like to write about. Your last enchanting letter has remained too long unanswered. I wish you could *feel* the joy such letters give me. When I have finished reading one of your letters, I go on thinking, wishing, talking it over, almost listening to it. . . . Do feel, do know how much I appreciate them—so much more than I can say!

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I must reply about "Ulysses". I have been wondering what people are saying in England. It took me about a fortnight to wade through, but on the whole I'm dead *against* it. I suppose it was worth doing if everything is worth doing . . . but that is certainly not what I want from literature. Of course, there are amazingly fine things in it, but I prefer to go without them than to pay that price. Not because I am shocked (though I am fearfully shocked, but that's 'personal'; I suppose it's unfair to judge the book by that) but because I simply don't believe. . . .

My Darling.

Well, who could have believed it—who could have imagined it? What a marvellous, what a miraculous thing has happened! I'm trembling, I feel quite . . . But I mustn't get too excited; one must keep one's sense of proportion. Be calm!

I can't. I can't! Not just for the moment. If you could feel my heart! It's not beating very fast, not racing, as they say, but it's simply quivering—an extraordinary sensation—and if I am quite sincere, I feel such a longing to kneel down. Not to pray. I scarcely know what for. To say 'Forgive me!' To say 'My darling!' But I should cry if I said it. My darling! My darling! Do you know I've never known anyone well enough to call them that. It's a beautiful word, isn't it? And one puts out one's hand when one

My Darling

says it and just touches the other . . . No, no. It's fatal to think such things. One mustn't let oneself go.

Here I am—back in my room. I should like to go over to the window and open it wide. But I daren't yet. Supposing he were looking out of his and he saw; it might seem marked. One can't be too careful. I will stay where I am for the present until my—my excitement dies down a little. No. 134. That is the number of my room. I only realized at that moment that I am still holding my big flat door-key. What is his number? Oh, I have wondered that so often. Shall I ever know? Why should I? And yet what has just happened. . . .

If a flash-light photograph had been taken at that moment, or a fire had broken out, and we had been unable to move and only our charred bodies found, it would have been the most natural thing in the world for people to suppose we were—together. We must have looked exactly like the other couples. Even his reading the newspaper and not speaking to me seemed to make it more natural. . . .

This tenderness, this longing. This feeling of waiting for something. What is it? Come! Come! And then one goes out, and there are new leaves on the trees, the light shakes on the grass and everywhere there is a gentle stirring.

I have never been very good at imagining things. Some people have so much imagination. They make up long stories about the future.

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May 28. It seems so much more real now than when I last wrote. Then I felt that at any moment I would be whisked back into my cage; and every time I went out, I wondered if I should have to turn back. But it's marvellous how soon one accepts blessings. Curses one never gets used to.

Comme il faut.

At precisely the right moment, neither too early nor too late, their large blue car, which was exactly like all the other cars, turned in at the iron gates, scrunched over the small gravel and came to a stop under an immense glass porch. Their behaviour then and the moment after was perfect. Unhurried, even a little reluctant, they got out. She stood staring, with no expression whatever in her blue eyes, over the heads of those who were already established at the garden tables; and he looked faintly contemptuous, bored, and as if determined to stand no nonsense from the dog-like fawning waiters.

Normal or Average?

“The failure of Lombroso and his followers, as Max Nordau, to understand the position comes from the mistaken view that man is a simple and not a compound thing. Admitting the definition of degenerate, viz. ‘that which cannot fulfil its function in the world and propagate itself’, a body may well be degenerate

Gods and Devils

and yet 'better value' to a psyche which is not bent on propagating bodies than a most eugenic body which cannot detect any but the sexual aromas of the world. Degeneracy means *in fact* a departure from the 'normal', a word which has done more harm to modern thinking than has almost any other conception, for it seems to have escaped notice that it means only 'average'. Many who feel some kind of pride in being normal, or a moral obligation to remain so, would have no wish to be classed as average." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

Most interesting!

Reincarnation and Heredity.

"Some of the difficulties of reconciling heredity and reincarnation would, I think, be removed if it were recognised that many of the habits and tricks which are looked upon as disproving reincarnation since they are taken as clear evidence of heredity (as, too, of the identity of a 'ghost' with a departed man), are entirely physiological, or at any rate of a very low grade on the psychological scale, and have little if anything to do with the reincarnating ego, being dependent on Soma." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

Gods and Devils.

"It is an important fact, which is often forgotten, that the essential for *existence*, on what-

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ever level we consider it, is struggle. Life is manifest by change, and growth; Death by change in the opposite direction, so to speak. Struggle leads either towards unity or diversity, and the one we call God, the other the Devil, though they are both the same Absolute. Man has climbed towards God by crushing his vessel of matter towards the Devil, but has left with it in return that 'odour of the ointment' by which it will some day be directed in its climb when the hour strikes. Just as there are many grades of gods, so too of devils. The greatest of these is the All-Mother. . . . Without which there would be no Cosmos. The latest is, perhaps, Jehovah; for each God, after we have passed him on the way, marks for us a stage towards our starting-point, not our goal, and hence comes one of our difficulties. Man being actually a complex machine of many parts, for each of these parts the god and devil of the moment is different, and in accepting as we do that Intellect shall rule the Community we have set up an impossible state of things." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

Mr. Rendall and the Cat.

As old Mr. Rendall sat at the window with the rug over his knees, with his spectacles, folded handkerchief, medicine and newspaper on a little table beside him—as he sat there, looking out, he saw a large, strange cat bound on to the fence and jump right into the very middle of his lawn. Old

Mr. Rendall and the Cat

Mr. Rendall hated cats. The sight of this one, so bold, so care-free, roving over the grass, sniffing, chewing at a blade of something as though the whole place belonged to it, sent a quiver of rage through him. He shifted his feet in the felt slippers, his hands lifted, trembled, and grasped the knobs of his chair.

"Tss!" he said, glaring spitefully at the cat. But it was a small feeble sound. Of course, the cat did not hear. What was to be done? His yellowish old eyes glanced round the parlour for something to throw. But even supposing there had been something—a shell off the mantelpiece, or a glass paper-weight from the centre table, surely old Mr. Rendall knew he could no more throw it at the cat than the cat could throw it back at him.

Ah, the hateful beast! It was a large tabby with a thin tail and a round flat face like a penny bun. Now, folding its paws, it squatted down exactly opposite the parlour window, and it was impossible not to believe that its bold gaze was directed expressly at him. It knew how he hated it. Much it cared. It had come into his world without asking, it would stay as long as it chose and go again when the fancy seized it.

A cold snatch of wind raked the grass, blew in the fur of the tabby, rattled the laburnum, and sent the kitchen smoke spinning downwards on the stony little garden. High up in the air it seemed to old Mr. Rendall that the wind was against him, too, was in league with the cat, and made that shrill sound on purpose to defy him.

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Spring in Tyrrell Street.

On a fine spring morning, one of those delicious spotless mornings when one feels that celestial housemaids have been joyfully busy all through the night, Mrs. Quill locked the back door, the pantry window, and the front door, and set off for the railway station.

"Good-bay, wee house!" said she, as she shut the gate, and she felt the house heard and loved her. It was not quite empty. In her bedroom, in his cradle, Chi-chi lay sleeping his morning sleep. But the blind was down and he was so beautifully trained. She counted on him not waking up until she was back.

At that hour, all the little houses in Tyrrell Street basked in the radiant light; all the canaries, in *their* little houses hanging from the verandah poles, sang their shrillest. It was difficult to understand how the infants in perambulators who shared the verandahs with the canaries slept through the din. But they apparently did; no sound came from them. Up and down spanked the important-looking bright yellow butcher's cart, and in and out of the back gates went the baker's boy with his basket clamped to his back like a big shell.

It had rained in the night. There were still puddles—broken stars—on the road. But the pavement was beautifully dry. What a pleasure it was to walk on the nice clean pavement!

Proof.

"There is no *proof*, though there may be what is called a mathematical proof, that 2 and 2 make 4, except to continue adding them together until we get tired of hoping for any other result, and even then a Lobatschewski may step in and show that our assumed certainty is only true as a special case, after we have (unconsciously) fixed the limits within which we will work. Any other proof than that of experience, *e.g.* a mathematical one, is only an extension from this proof of experience, and merely says when 2 and 2 make 4, 4 and 4 make 8." (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

The Sheridans.

It was late afternoon when Mrs. Sheridan, after having paid Heaven knows how many calls, turned towards home.

"Thank Heaven, that's all over!" she sighed, as she clicked the last gate to, and stuffed her little Chinese card-case into her handbag.

But it was not all over. Although she hadn't the faintest desire to remember her afternoon, her mind, evidently, was determined she should not forget it. And so she walked along seeing herself knocking at doors, crossing dim halls into large pale drawing-rooms, hearing herself saying, "No, she would not have any tea, thank you. Yes, they were all splendidly well. No, they had

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not seen it yet. The children were going to-night. Yes, fancy, he had arrived. Young and good-looking too! Quite an asset! Oh dear no! She was determined not to allow any of her girls to marry. It was quite unnecessary now-a-days, and such a risk!" And so on and so on.

"What nonsense calling is! What a waste of time! I have never met a single woman yet who even pretended to like it. Why keep it up then? Why not decide once and for all? Mock-orange . . ." And Mrs. Sheridan woke out of her dream to find herself standing under a beautiful mock-orange bush that grew against the white palings of old Mr. Phillips' garden. The little sponge-like fruits—flowers? which were they?—shone burning-bright in the late afternoon sun. "They are like little worlds," she thought, peering up through the large crumpled leaves; and she put out her hand and touched one gently. "The feel of things is so strange, so different, one never seems to know a thing until one has felt it—at least that is true of flowers. Roses for instance,—who can smell a rose without kissing it? And pansies, little darlings they are! People don't pay half enough attention to pansies." Now her glove was all brushed with yellow. But it didn't matter. She was glad, even. "I wish you grew in my garden," she said regretfully to the mock-orange bush, and she went on, thinking, "I wonder why I love flowers so much. None of the children inherit it from me. Laura perhaps. But even then it's not the same. She's too young to feel as I do. I love flowers more than people,

The Sheridans

except my own family, of course. Take this afternoon, for instance. The only thing that really remains is that mock-orange."

But this is not expanded enough, or rich enough. I think still a description of the hour and place should come first. And the light should fall on the figure of Mrs. S. on her way home. Really I can allow myself to write a great deal—to describe it all—the baths, the avenue, the people in the gardens, the Chinaman under the tree in May Street. But in that case she won't be conscious of these things. That's bad. They must be seen and felt by her as she wanders home. . . . That sense of flowing in and out of houses—going and returning—like the tide. To go and not to return. How terrible! The father in his dressing-room—the familiar talk. His using her hair-brush—his passion for things that *wear well*. The children sitting round the table—the light outside, the silver. Her feeling as she sees them all gathered together—her longing for them always to be *there*. Yes, I'm getting nearer all this. I now remember S.W. and see that it must be written with love—real love. All the same, the difficulty is to get it all within *focus*—to introduce that young doctor and bring him continually nearer and nearer until finally he is part of the Sheridan family, until finally he has taken away Meg . . . that is by no means easy. . . .

Now her white glove was all brushed with yellow. But it did not matter. She was glad,

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even. "Why don't you grow in my garden?" she said regretfully to the mock-orange bush. And she went on thinking, "I wonder why I love flowers so much. I love them more than people—except my own family, of course. But take this afternoon, for instance. The only thing that really remains is that mock-orange. I mean, when I was standing under that bush, it was the only moment when I felt in touch with something. These things are very difficult to explain. But the fact remains I never feel that need of anybody—apart from Claude and the children. If the rest of the world was swept away to-morrow . . ."

Return again! Come—it was an agony to Mr. Sheridan to be late, or to know that others were late. It had always been so. Talking with his wife in the garden—the stillness, the lightness, the steps on the gravel—the dark trees, the flowers, the night-scented stocks—what happiness it was to walk with him there! What he said did not really matter so very much. But she felt she had him to herself in a way that no other occasion granted her. She felt *his ease*, and although he never looked at what she pointed out to him it did not matter. His 'very nice, dear!' was enough. He was always planning, always staring towards a future. . . . 'I should like later on.' But she—she did not care in the least; the present was all she loved and dwelt in. . . .

I have been thinking over this story this morning. I suppose I know as much about it now as I shall know. So it seems. And if just the miracle

The Sheridans

happened I would walk into it and make it mine. Even to write that, brings it all nearer. It's very strange, but the mere act of *writing anything* is a help. It seems to speed one on one's way . . . But my feet are so cold.

The excitement began first thing that morning by their father suddenly deciding that, after all, they could have champagne. What! Impossible! Mother was joking!

A fierce discussion had raged on this subject ever since the invitations were sent out, Father pooh-poohing — and refusing to listen, and Mother, as usual siding with him when she was with him: ("Of course, darling: I quite agree") and siding with them when she was with them: ("Most unreasonable, I more than see the point"). So that by this time they had definitely given up hope of champagne, and had focussed all their attention on the hock cup instead. And now, for no reason whatever, with nobody saying a word to him—so like Father!—he had given in.

"It was just after Zaidee had brought in our morning tea. He was lying on his back, you know, staring at the ceiling. And suddenly he said: 'I don't want the children to think I am a wet blanket about this dance affair. If it's going to make all that difference to them; if it's a question of the thing going with a swing or not going with a swing, then I'm inclined to let them have champagne. I'll call in and order it on my way to the Bank.'"

"My dear! What did you say?"

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"What could I say? I was overcome. I said: 'That's very generous of you, Daddy dear', and I placed the entire plate of cut bread and butter on his chest. As a kind of sacrifice to the darling. I felt he deserved it, and he does so love those thin shaves of bread and butter."

"Can't you see the plate," cried Laurie, "gently rising and falling on his pyjama jacket?"

They began to laugh, but it really was most thrilling. . . . Champagne did make all the difference—didn't it? Just the feeling it was there gave such a different . . . Oh, absolutely!

Baby Jean.

There are certain human beings on this earth who do not care a safety-pin whether their loved one is beautiful or pretty or youthful or rich. One thing only they ask of her, and that is that she should smile.

"Smile! Smile now!" their eyes, their fingers, their toes, and even their tiny jackets say. In fact, the tassel of little Jean's cap, which was much too big for him and hung over one eye with a drunken effect, said it loudest of all.

Every time his mother swooped forward to put it straight, it was all she could do not to lift him out of the pram and press him—squeeze him to her shoulder while she rubbed her cheek against his white cheek, and told him what she thought of him.

Jean's cheeks were white because he lived in a

Baby Jean

basement. He was, however, according to his mother, a perfectly healthy child, and good—lively. He had merry, almost cunning, little eyes.

“Smile!” said Jean’s eyebrows, which were just beginning to show.

On a perfect spring afternoon he and his mother set out for the Jardins Publiques together. It was his first spring. A year ago he had been of course much too young—six months only!—to be in the open air for any length of time. Even now his mother wheeled him out in the teeth of his grandmother’s awful prophecies and the neighbours’ solemn warnings. The open air is so weakening for a baby and the sun, as everyone knows, is very, very dangerous. One catches fever from sitting in the sun, colds in the head, weeping eyes. Jean’s Gran, before daring to face its rays, plugged her ears with wool, wrapped herself round in an extra black shawl, gave a final twist which hid her mouth and her pale beak-like nose, and pulled black woollen mitts over her cotton ones. Thus attired, with a moan of horror, she scuttled away to the bread shop and, having scuttled back, she drank something blue out of a bottle as an extra precaution. . . .

How much wiser to sit inside at the open door with Jean so that he could be whipped back into the kitchen if he sneezed or became flushed. But no! There was a wicked recklessness about Jean’s mother. First she had made up her mind to buy a pram, and she had bought one second-

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hand. Then she had set her heart on taking Jean to the Jardins Publiques. And here they were!

It is lovely in the public gardens; it is full spring. The lilac is in flower, the new grass quivers in the light, and the trees, their delicate leaves gold in the sun, stand with branches outspread as if in blessing.

Up the main path go Jean and his mother. She is extremely proud of him, and she is proud of herself for having managed to bring him there. The wheels of the pram squeak and this delights her, too, for she thinks everyone will notice it and look at Jean. But nobody does. Mothers, nurses, babies, lovers, students go by in a stream. A little boy tugs his grandfather's hand. "Run!" he says. "Run!" And they stagger off together. It is hard to say which will fall down first.

But all this is absolutely mysterious to little Jean. First, he looks one side; then he looks the other. Then he stares at his mother, who nods and says "Cuckoo!" But how does "Cuckoo" explain anything? For a moment he wonders if he ought to cry. But there seems to be nothing to cry about—so he jumps up and down instead and tries to burst out of some of the tight hot little coats and shawls that are half-smothering him. The heat in the pram is terrible; he is sitting on a blanket, a broad strap cuts across his legs, and on either side, at his feet, and behind his head, there are large newspaper parcels which contain his mother's mending.

"Are you hungry? Are you hungry? Hungry?"

The Office Boy

Hungry?" asks his mother as she wheels the pram over to a bench and sits down. Jean is never hungry. But he takes the biscuit that she shows to him, nibbles it, and stares at the grass on the other side of the low railing.

The Office Boy.

After a succession of idle, or careless, or clumsy, or unwilling little boys had passed through the office, after horrid little boys that the typists couldn't bear to come near them—"Stand further off, please!"—or clumsy young idiots who tripped on the Boss's doormat every time they came to him with a message—the appearance of Charlie Parker on the scene was more than relief, it was hailed with positive pleasure by everybody. His mother was good old Ma Parker, the office cleaner, whose husband, a chimney sweep, had died in a chimney! Really—the poor seem to go out of their way to find extraordinary places to die in! Charlie was the eldest of goodness knows how many little P's. So many, in fact, that the clergyman's wife, who was tired of delivering parcels of flannelette at the tiny house with the black brush over the gate, said that she didn't believe Mr. Parker's death had made the slightest difference to Mrs. Parker. "I don't believe anything will stop her. I am sure there has been a new one since I was there last. I think it has become pure habit and she will go on and on—eating into the Maternity Bag," said the clergy-

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man's wife crossly. "I confess, my dear, I find you slightly difficult to follow," said her husband.

Well, if they were all like Charlie it wasn't greatly to be wondered at. What trouble would he have given his mother? He was one of those children who must have been a comfort ever since he found his legs. At fourteen he was a firm, upstanding little chap—on the slender side, perhaps—but quite a little man, with bright blue eyes, shining brown hair, good teeth that showed when he smiled—he was always smiling—and a fair baby skin that turned crimson when the typists teased him. But that wasn't all. He was so neat, so careful of his appearance—so—brushed and combed! There was never a speck on his blue serge suit. When you looked at his tie you wanted to smile, you could see how solemnly that knot had been drawn just so. Beams came from his hair and his boots, and his childish hands were a deep pink colour as though he'd just finished drying them.

From his first day at the office Charlie found his place, as though he had been dreaming all his life what he would do when he was an office boy. He changed the blotting paper on the desks, kept the inkpots clean and filled, saw that there were fresh nibs, carried wire baskets of letters from the typists' room to the Boss, to the acting Manager, to Mr. Tonks of the wholesale order department, went to the post office, bought immense quantities of different kinds of stamps, asked the various callers who it was they wished to see, answered

The Office Boy

the store-room telephone,—and at four o'clock when Miss Hickness, the head typist, had boiled a kettle on the electric heater she was so proud of, he took in the Boss's tea.

A knock at the door.

"Come in!"

Enter Charlie, with the tea-tray, very serious and yet trying not to smile. He walks so straight that his knees rub together and if as much as a saucer clatters, he draws in his breath and frowns. . . .

"Ah, Charlie!" the Boss leans back. "That my tea?"

"Yes, Sir"—and very carefully the tray is lowered and a pink hand reaches out and ventures to move back a paper or two. Then Charlie stands upright like a soldier on parade, and glaring at the sugar as if he dared it to take wings and fly, he says: "Have you everything you want, Sir?"

"Yes, I think so, Charlie," says the Boss, easy and genial.

Charlie turns to go.

"Oh, one moment, Charlie!"

And the little boy turns round and looks full at the Boss, and the Boss looks back into those candid innocent eyes. "You might—you might tell Miss Walker to come in to me in half an hour."

"Very good, Sir!" says Charlie. And he is gone. But the Boss pours out his tea and the tea tastes wonderfully good. There is something especially crisp about the biscuits too, and there's

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no doubt afternoon tea is refreshing—he's noticed it particularly lately. . . .

It was extraordinary the difference one little boy made in the office, "'E couldn't be made more fuss of if 'e was a little dog," said the storeman. "It's like 'aving a pet in the 'ouse, that's what it is."

And he was right. To have someone who was always eager and merry and ready to play. Someone to like you when saying silly things if you wanted to. Someone who—if you did say a kind word—as good as jumped in the air for joy. But why wasn't he spoilt? That was what the typists couldn't understand. But everybody went out of the way to be nice, to be kind to him—when even the Boss made a fad of him why didn't he become an odious little horror?

Mystery. . . . However . . .

One October afternoon, blustery, with a drizzle of rain . . .

. . . Once they're found out—once the taint's discovered—you might as well try and get rid of a touch of the tar-brush.

. . . "No," he thought, staring at a drowned leaf that bobbed against the edge of the cup, "it's no good. It won't work. Charlie must go."

. . . And now, thinking over Charlie's cleanliness and cheerfulness and good temper, it seemed to him that it had all been acting. An astonishing example in so young a boy of criminal cleverness. What else could it have been? Look how,

The Dressmaker

even after he had been forgiven and the whole thing wiped out, after he'd been allowed to get off scot free . . .

This story won't do. It is a silly story.

The Dressmaker.

One advantage in having your clothes made by Miss Phillips was that you had to go through the garden to get to the house. Perhaps it was the only advantage, for Miss Phillips was a strange, temperamental dressmaker with ever a surprise up her—no, indeed—in your own sleeve, for you. Sleeves were her weakness, her terror. I fancy she looked upon them as devils, to be wrestled with but never overcome. Now a body, once she had tried it on first in newspaper, then in unbleached calico and finally in the lining, she could make a very pretty fit to the figure. She liked to linger over her bodies, to stroke them, to revolve round them, hissing as was her wont, faintly. But the moment she dreaded came at last.

"Have you cut out the sleeve, Miss Phillips?"

"Yes, Miss. I 'ave—one moment, Miss. If you please!" And with a look half peevish half desperate, the strange funnel-shaped thing was held up for your arm to thrust into.

"The armhole is very tight, Miss Phillips."

"They're wearing them very small this seasing, Miss."

"But I can't get my hand near my head."

"Near your red, Miss?" echoed Miss Phillips, as though it was the first time she had ever heard of this gymnastic feat being attempted. Finally, she repinned it and raised it on the shoulder.

"But now it's much too short, Miss Phillips. I wanted a lo—ong sleeve . . . I wanted a point over the hand." Points over the hand always seemed to me, still seem to me, excessively romantic.

"Oh, Miss!" The tiny scissors then went 'sneep—sneep', like a bird on a cold morning, cut out a brown paper cuff and Miss Phillips pinned it on with fingers that trembled; while I frowned on the top of her head and even made faces at her in my rage. Her hair was so strange. It was grey, all in little tufts. It reminded you of a sheepskin hearthrug. And there were always threads, minute triangles of stuff, pieces of fluff sticking to it. It didn't want brushing, I thought, so much as a good sweeping and a shake out of the window. In person Miss Phillips was extremely thin and squeezed in so tight that every breath creaked, and in moments of emotion she sounded like a ship at sea. She invariably wore the same black alpaca apron, fitted on her left breast—oh, how cruel, how sinister it looked to me!—with a tight little red plush heart pierced all over with needles and pins, and a malignant-looking safety-pin or two to stab deeper—

"If you please, Miss, while I unpin you . . ."

Her small hard hands flew up, pinched, gripped like claws. She had a thin nose with just a dab of

The Dressmaker

red on the tip as though some wicked child with a paint-brush had caught her sleeping.

"Thank you, Miss Phillips. And you'll let me have it on Saturday?"

"I'll send it for certain, Miss," hissed Miss Phillips through a bristling mouthful of pins.

While I dressed in front of the long mirror that had spots at the side like frosted fingerprints, I loved to discover again that funny little room. In the corner by the fire-place stood the 'model' covered in red sateen. Its solidity ended at the hips in wire rings that reminded you of an egg-beater. But what a model it was! What shoulders, what a bosom—what curves, and no horrible arms to be clothed in sleeves, no head to be reached up to. It was Miss Phillips' God. It was also, I decided, a perfect lady. Thus and thus only do perfect ladies appear in the extreme privacy of her apartments. But above all it was god-like. I saw Miss Phillips alone, abstracted, lavishing her stuffs upon that imperturbable altar. Perhaps her failures even were to be excused. They were all part of a frenzy for sacrifice. . . .

At Putnam's Pier.

As the little steamer rounded the point and came into the next bay, they noticed the flag was flying from Putnam's Pier. That meant there were passengers to bring off. The Captain swore. They were half an hour late already and he couldn't

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bear not to be up to time. But Putnam's flag, cherry-red against the green bush on this brilliant morning, jigged gaily, to show it didn't care a flick for the Captain's feelings.

There were three people and an old sheep-dog waiting. One was a little old woman, nearing seventy perhaps, very spry, with a piece of lilac in her bonnet and pale lilac strings. She carried a bundle wrapped in a long shawl, white as a waterfall. Beside her stood the young parents. He was tall, broad, awkward in a stiff black suit with banana-yellow shoes and a light blue tie, and she looked soft and formless in a woollen coat; her hat was like a child's with its wreath of daisies, and she carried a bag like a child's school-kit, stuffed very full and covered with a cloth.

As the steamer drew near, the old sheep-dog ran forward and made a sound that was like the beginning of a bark, but he turned it off into an old dog's cough, as though he had decided that the little steamer wasn't worth barking about. The coil of rope was thrown, was looped; the one-plank gangway was spanned across, and over it tripped the old woman, running and bridling like a girl of eighteen.

"Thank you, Captain!" said she, giving the Captain a bird-like, impudent little nod.

"That's all right, Mrs. Putnam," said old Captain Reid, who had known her for the last forty years.

After her came the sheep-dog, then the young woman, looking lost, and she was followed by the

At Putnam's Pier

young man, who seemed terribly ashamed about something. He kept his head bent, he walked stiff as wood in his creaking shoes, and a long brown hand twisted away, twisted away at his fair moustache.

Old Captain Reid winked broadly at the passengers. He stuffed his hands in his short jacket, drew in a breath as if he was going to sing. "Morning, Mr. Putnam!" he roared. And the young man straightened himself with an immense effort and shot a terrified glance at the Captain. "Morning, Cap'n!" he mumbled.

Captain Reid considered him, shaking his head. "It's all right, my lad," he said. "We've all been through it. Jim here"—and he jerked his head at the man at the wheel—"had twins last time, hadn't you, Jim?"

"That's ri', Cap'n," said Jim, grinning broadly at the passengers. The little steamer quivered, throbbed, started on her way again, while the young man, in an agony, not greeting anyone, creaked off to the bows, and the two women—they were the only women on board—sat themselves down on a green bench against the white deck-rail. As soon as they had sat down,

"There, Mother, let me take him!" said the young woman anxiously, quietly. She tossed the kit away.

But Gran didn't want to give him up.

"Now don't you go tiring yourself," said she. "He's as nice as can be where he is."

Torture! The young woman gave a gasp like a sob.

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"Give him to me!" she said, and she actually twitched at her mother-in-law's sleeve.

The old woman knew perfectly well what she was feeling. Little channels for laughter showed in her cheeks. "My goodness gracious me!" she pretended to scold. "There's impatience for you." But even while she spoke she swung the baby gently, gently into its mother's arms. "There now!" said Gran, and she sat up sharp and gave the bow of her bonnet strings a tweak, as though she was glad to have her hands free after all.

It was an exquisite day. It was one of those days so clear, so still, so silent, you almost feel the earth itself has stopped in astonishment at its own beauty.

The Morality of Death.

"I believe I have always had a sort of grudge, in my heart of hearts, against the moral superiorities—I've had a mean little wish to get even with them. And it has come to me, in these last days, that Death has a sort of grudge, too. He makes them seem less important. He puts them in their right place. While, on the other hand, he makes you discover a place, a large and beautiful place, for the things we dread and despise: for humiliation and cowardice, for weakness and suffering and fear. I like to fancy that, for Death, life means things like

The Lost Christ

these at least as much as it means the others.”
(R. O. Prowse: *A Gift of the Dusk*.)

Symbolic Action.

“The Temple in Jerusalem is the body of Man. This equation of ‘real’ places and actions with ‘mystic’ ones is no doubt incomprehensible from our ordinary point of view; but when an Entity is of sufficient magnitude, or sufficiently identified with the Great or Magical World, his actions become identical with what we call happenings of nature, and such happenings, great or small as suits the occasion, become inextricably woven into his life. *A ‘casual’ event in the outer worlds becomes a truly symbolic act, which means one in which two lines of events are ‘thrown together’ for the moment.*” (*Cosmic Anatomy*.)

The Lost Christ.

“The doctrines of the Church may be divided into two parts; one deals with data so transcendent as to be for ever *uncomprehendable* by the intellect of man; the other with data so material that to the trained intellect they are distasteful, and give real satisfaction only to the most easily satisfied of the unintellectuals. The third part which should be present in all complete religious doctrines is lost, and it is the most important of the three, at any rate

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for the present moment, as it is the *vital* one—in fact, it is the Christ. Some will perhaps understand this better if they consider the first as symbolized by St. John, the second by St. Peter, and the third by St. Paul.” (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

The Bondage of Love.

“The verse from Galatians which is rendered ‘By love serve ye one another’ seems to be taken always as if it read ‘Render service to one another *for* love’. The word translated ‘serve’ means, at bottom, ‘to be a slave’, and the real translation of the verse is ‘Be in bondage to one another by love’, which is quite a different thing. In fact, this is another example of an immediate reality being converted into a mediate formality, just as we have converted Joy into ‘charitable’ almsgiving.” (*Cosmic Anatomy.*)

Sunday at Home.

Why should Sunday be so different to every other day? Why should the air, the sky, the clouds be different? Why should the dew take so much longer to dry on the bluish grass and how do the birds know it's Sunday? One can understand it in the town where all the shops are shut and the trams don't run until church time—but in the country—that stillness, that brightness,

Sunday at Home

that sense of joyful ease. . . . Where does it come from?

"Ting-a-tan! Ting-a-tan! Ting-a-tan-tan-tan" rang very faint from the little tin church over the hill. It sounded rather charming from a distance. They never dreamed of going any nearer. She washed her hair on Sunday mornings if the weather was fine; if it was wet she cleaned her white kid gloves. And he lay in a long chair on the verandah and read something or other. There had been a time when she had always come to dry her hair in the sun on the verandah. She stood in her white kimono against the big blue plumbago, looking solemn and fanning that flag of hair, until he put down his book and drawled lazily, "I say what a lot! How jolly it looks!" There had been a time when she had always pinned helpless exhausted-looking gloves to the verandah poles to air, while he murmured: "They look like absurd little mice." But that was over. Nothing had been said, but both of them understood why.

Mountain Hotel.

Behind the hotel—*à deux pas de l'hôtel*, as the prospectus said—there was an immense stretch of gently rising turf dotted with clumps of pine and fir trees. Beyond was the forest, threaded with green paths and hoarse, quick-tumbling little streams. Dark blue mountains, streaked with white, rose above the forest, and higher still there

Scrapbook 1922

was another range, bright silver, floating across the still, transparent sky.

What could be more pleasant, after the long terribly cold winter, than to sit outside on a fine spring afternoon and to talk, slowly, softly, at one's ease? Nothing has happened, and yet there seems so much to say. In the winter one can go for weeks without saying a word more than is necessary. But now, in the warmth and light, there is such a longing to talk that it is hard to wait for one's turn. . . . It was hot in the sun. Auntie Marie had a newspaper over her head; Auntie Rose a handkerchief. But little Anna's father, whose hair was thick like fur, refused to cover himself. They sat, the three of them, in a row on cane chairs outside the back door of the hotel and little Anna danced, now before them, now behind, now from side to side, like a gnat.

Little Anna and her father had come up from the valley by the funicular to spend the day with the Aunties who owned this immense, airy hotel with its wide windows and wooden balconies and glassed-in verandah lounge. What! all this was owned by these two insignificant little grey-haired creatures in their black stuff dresses. They themselves seemed to realise how dreadfully inappropriate it was, and hurriedly explained in almost a horrified whisper that it had been left to them. And as they could never sell it or let it they tried to make a living out of it. But very, very few people came. It was too quiet for young people. There was no dancing, no golf, nothing on earth to do but to stare at the view. And,

Disenchantment

thank Heaven, they hadn't come to that yet! And it was too quiet for old people. There was no chemist, no doctor within call. As for the view, when one did stare at it one felt inclined to whimper—the mountains looked so cruelly unsympathetic.

I seem to have lost all power of writing. I can think, in a vague way, and it all seems more or less real and worth doing. But I can't see any further. I can't write it down. Sometimes I think my brain is going. But no! I know the real reason. It's because I am still suffering from a kind of nervous prostration caused by my life in Paris. For instance, those interviews with the dentist. If anyone else—anyone with imagination—had realised what I suffered, they would have known I was really at the end of my strength. And that the strain of keeping going, of brushing my clothes, of making the constant, renewed effort, and talking to Brett, coughing. . . . Bogey was perfectly marvellous. But watching him do everything was really nearly as tiring as doing it oneself. And then, on other journeys, look at the care I had taken of me—everything was spared. There was nothing to do but to keep still. This time I felt at the mercy of everything. Tchegov, by the way, felt this disenchantment, exactly. And who would not feel it who lives with a pessimist? To keep another going, is a million times more tiring than to keep oneself going. And then there is always the feeling that all falls on *stony ground*. Nothing is nourished, watched, cherished. He hears. It gives him a

Scrapbook 1922

vague sense of life, and then it passes away from him as though it never had been, and he . . .

(*June, 1922.*)

Tchehov's Last Letters.

"I am torn up by the roots, I am not living a full life, I don't drink, though I am fond of drinking; I love noise and don't hear it—in fact, I am in the condition of a transplanted tree which is hesitating whether to take root or to begin to wither." (*February 10, 1900.*)

So am I exactly.

"I live on the ground floor."

(*June 12, 1904.*)

"My health has improved. I don't notice now as I go about that I am ill; my asthma is better, nothing is aching." (*June 16, 1904.*)

"I confess I dread the railway journey. It's stifling in the train now, particularly with my asthma, which is made worse by the slightest thing."

"I like the food here very much, but it does not seem to suit me; my stomach is constantly being upset. Evidently my digestion is hopelessly ruined. It is scarcely possible to cure it by anything except fasting—that is, eating nothing, and that's the end of it. And the only remedy for the asthma is not moving." (*June 28, 1904.*)

Who reads between the lines here? I at least. K. M.

No More Fire

November.

[The following list of words and phrases, for which she sought the Russian equivalent, is eloquent of the discomforts which Katherine deliberately endured at the Gurdjieff Institute at Fontainebleau.]

I am cold.

Bring paper to light a fire.

Paper.

Cinders.

Wood.

Matches.

Flame.

Smoke.

Strong.

Strength.

Light a fire.

No more fire.

Because there is no more fire.

White paper.

Black paper.

What is the time?

It is late.

It is still early.

Good.

I would like to speak Russian with you.

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IVOR BROWN (*Manchester Guardian*).

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Times.

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* * * * *

JOHN GALSWORTHY

said of Katherine Mansfield

" Her talent was unique among us ; she could reach and bring before us the in-between spaces and things and thoughts. Her work stirs and excites us, and so quietly ; it is all an expression of the mood in love with life. It has the rare flavour that endures. Beautiful work."

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